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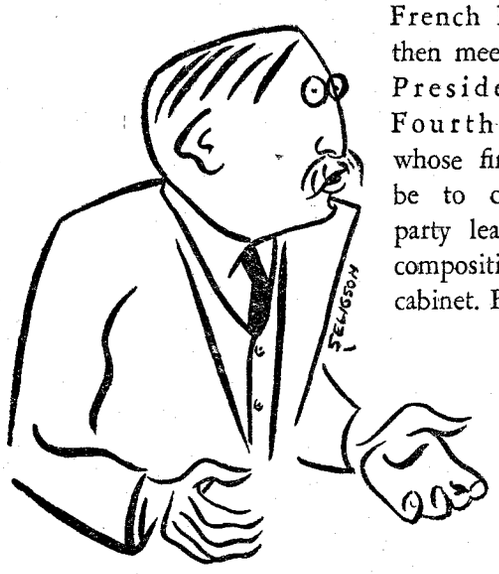
The Shape of Things

WE SALUTE LEON BLUM, PREMIER OF FRANCE, who on the insistent orders of his physicians will retire from public life on January 14. On that day the interim government which he so courageously formed a few weeks ago, when all efforts to create a broad coalition administration failed, must in any case resign. For the French Parliament then meets to elect a President of the Fourth Republic whose first task will be to consult with party leaders on the composition of a new cabinet. But if Blum's last spell of office has been brief, it has also been notable. He and his colleagues energetically tackled the thankless task of stabilizing the budget and checking the rise in prices. They obtained the approval of the National Assembly for increases in taxes and economies in governmental costs. But their most dramatic move to stem the inflationary tide was a decree ordering an immediate 5 per cent cut in *all* prices, to be followed by a similar reduction on March 1. Cynics said this was a futile gesture, but the decree, reinforced by appeals from Blum and other ministers for public cooperation, is beginning to show signs of effectiveness. By providing a "psychological shock" it seems to have countered to some extent the fatalistic idea that inflation could not be ended and that individual security, therefore, could only be achieved by hoarding goods and foreign currencies. A sharp break in the black-market quotation for dollars since the decree came into force may prove significant. But the present effort needs to be sustained, for the hopes which Blum has rekindled could easily collapse in the absence of a determined government. Another prolonged ministerial crisis would be disastrous to France.



Léon Blum

THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSALS FOR LABOR legislation in his "state of the union" message proved far from satisfying to the diehards of Congress and the business world. These men barely disguise their desire for the kind of "vindictive laws" which Mr. Truman rejected. They want, as a minimum, the revived Case bill, if possible with the addition of bans on the closed shop and industry-wide collective bargaining. Mr. Truman, on the other hand, suggested that legislation should be restricted to the remedying of such ills as jurisdictional strikes and to the provision of compulsory arbitration when disputes over the interpretation of existing contracts could not be settled by other methods. In addition, he asked Congress to facilitate an extension of federal mediation machinery, to extend social-security legislation, and to convene a temporary joint commission to inquire into the whole field of labor-management relations. It might prove a wise move by the unions if they all joined together in giving general support to this program; it would be their best hope of staving off much more drastic measures. Unfortunately, even in this hour of crisis, there is no sign of any sort of united labor action. Senator Murray, who arranged a dinner to discuss ways of combating the anti-union drive, was unable to persuade A. F. of L. leaders to join those of the C. I. O. at his table. This is the kind of thing that encourages such rumors as that of a Taft-A. F. of L. deal on a measure designed to cripple C. I. O. industrial unions without seriously hurting craft unions. We can well believe that Taft, a very smart operator, might concoct such a divide-and-conquer scheme. But surely the A. F. of L. leaders are not so blinded by hate of the C. I. O. that they could fall into so palpable a trap.

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IN THE PRESENT CONDITION OF EUROPEAN affairs, the State Department's protest against electoral abuses in Poland is likely to have more ill effects than good. The ruling factor in the Polish situation is surely that Moscow will never permit the establishment of a regime that it considers likely to be unfriendly to the Soviet Union. In effect that means that it will not consent to a restoration of the old church-dominated, landlord capitalism. Obviously, and with some reason, the Soviet

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Editor and Publisher: Freda Kirchwey

Managing Editor J. King Gordon — *Literary Editor* Randall Jarrell*

European Editor: J. Alvarez del Vayo

Associate Editors

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Drama: Joseph Wood Krutch *Music:* B. H. Haggin

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Director of Nation Associates: Lillie Shultz

* Margaret Marshall on leave of absence.

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government considers that a victory for the Polish Peasant Party might lead to such a restoration. Mr. Mikolajczyk's alleged complicity in the terroristic campaign of the so-called resistance movement is only a facet of the larger issue. Two things appear certain. It was foreign pressure which prevailed upon Mr. Mikolajczyk to withdraw from the Warsaw coalition. And in certain districts the Polish Peasant Party leadership is more or less identical with that of the underground, whose aims are certainly not democratic. We believe it would be wise to recognize that the Western powers can hope to have little influence over Polish affairs until a solution of the social problem of Europe is in sight. At present Moscow is all too likely to interpret our demands upon Poland in the light of our practices elsewhere. In Germany we have failed to carry out the promised denazification, and only now are we beginning to move against the cartels. Events in Italy and Greece and our reluctance to take action against clerical fascism in Spain tend to confirm the impression in Moscow and Warsaw that we are less interested in Polish democracy than in setting up a conservative opposition.

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WE HAVE OFTEN BEEN SHARPLY CRITICAL of the British government's policy; and we are under no illusion that Britain is already an enchanted isle of Socialist prosperity. But an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* purporting to give an accurate picture of life in Britain seems to us so wilfully dishonest that it is worth while answering its main points. The author, who writes in the style of a soured business man replying to charges of breaches of promise, declares that "under the present government England has become a nation of pilferers and house-breakers." This accusation, which would otherwise be merely grotesque, is coupled with the advice not to send relief packages to Britain, not only because they are stolen but because the British government "diverts them to needier cases . . . few arrive at the addressed destination." Both assertions are deliberate falsehoods. The writer also implies that Mr. Churchill's prophecy that the Labor Party would set up a Gestapo regime has been fulfilled. It is true that every person must possess an identity card. This is not a police requirement, however, but a necessary protection for the rationing system. The statement that no one is allowed to leave England without government permission is also mendacious. So far, the only person who has been refused a passport is Sir Oswald Mosley. The article shows no sympathy with labor; yet the writer states that "many Britishers are still working compulsorily in industries they dislike." True, war-time compulsion still exists in three critical industries—building, coal mining, and agriculture—to the extent that workers engaged in them cannot take jobs in

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other industries. This measure, accepted as an unpleasant necessity by the unions, is slated to disappear in the near future. There are many other distortions in this nasty piece, the intention of which is clearly to arouse American antagonism against the Labor Government.

*

MEMO TO WILLIAM H. HASKELL: SORRY, OLD boy, but it doesn't pay to tweak the nose of the Golden Calf. When you told the judge in the Alvin Paris "football fix" trial in New York that you were unfit for jury duty because you were "in a gambling business" yourself and "might be a little prejudiced one way or the other," you probably were pretty pleased with yourself—you had successfully begged off serving as juryman. As a customer's man for E. F. Hutton and Company—the E. F. Hutton who runs personally paid full-page ads extolling the virtues of the American Way—you ought to have known better. When you got fired the next day, and when the Stock Exchange, that over-sensitive plant, canceled your registration, it was just what you had coming in the way of "straight-from-the-shoulder education"—one of Mr. Hutton's favorite phrases. Consider yourself educated, Mr. Haskell.

The Secretary of State

GENERAL MARSHALL has qualities we admire in an American officer: he is a big man without arrogance, an efficient organizer with no inclination to run a one-man show, a war leader who understands the basis of global peace, a soldier who appreciates the essentially civilian character of a democratic state. In his one important post-war assignment he brought credit to himself in a mission that failed. Moreover, he displayed political understanding and courage in assessing the complex Chinese situation in language of more than diplomatic frankness. These qualities will serve him and his country well in his new post as Secretary of State.

Having said this, we must express our hearty disapproval of the Administration's action in breaking the tradition of civilian leadership in the conduct of foreign affairs. This tradition is all the more important in a nation which has brought foreign affairs closely under the supervision of the executive branch and removed them from the day-to-day responsibility of the elected Congress. It is a serious criticism of this Administration that no civilian, either in the State Department itself or in some other branch of public life, appeared a logical choice for this position of critical importance.

The Marshall appointment emphasizes both organizational and policy deficiencies in the State Department. President Roosevelt, especially during the war, personally directed the conduct of foreign affairs. After his death there was no unifying force in American foreign policy. President Truman was ill equipped to give direction; Stettinius was a weak and unhappy stop-gap; Byrnes, who must be given much credit for the ultimate outcome of the Big Five negotiations, was occupied almost solely with immediate European crises. The State Department, left rudderless, developed a disconcerting tendency to sail off in all directions. In such a situation it is perhaps natural that Mr. Truman, having made one brilliant improvisation in picking Patrick Hurley's successor in China, should make the same improvisation in picking Mr. Byrnes's successor in State. One of Marshall's first big jobs will be to reorganize the department and clarify its policy; for the latter, if it has existed at all, has been carried around during the last year or two under Mr. Byrnes's hat.

The new Secretary's first big foreign assignment will of course be the Moscow conference to draft the German settlement. It will be a severe test of his abilities. Lacking first-hand contact with European affairs after the war, General Marshall will be able to draw upon a rich experience gained during the war-time meetings he participated in at Casablanca, Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam. Not only did he become familiar with the basic issues in the big-power relations, but he was in a position to study the constructive and imaginative approach of President Roosevelt in seeking basic agreement. Marshall is not Roosevelt; but in foreign affairs he is likely to be a Roosevelt man.

George C. Marshall

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We must end on a note of warning. The influence of the army and navy on post-war American policy is no myth. Our Pacific policy is built around the necessity of American bases. Our South American policy is immediately threatened by the pressure to reach a military agreement with the fascist Perón. General Leahy is a painful actuality in the White House family. Marshall, as an army man, is going to have his troubles, and it will be difficult for him not to approach many international matters primarily as problems of national security and military strategy. We hope he will be able to resist army pressure and to detect military maneuvers which may cancel out policies of the State Department and its representatives on various United Nations bodies. We suggest he should put up over his desk two sentences from his report on China: "Though I speak as a soldier, I must also deplore the dominating influence of the military. Their dominance accentuates the weakness of civil government in China." And in the United States, Mr. Secretary.

G.O.P. Budget Problem

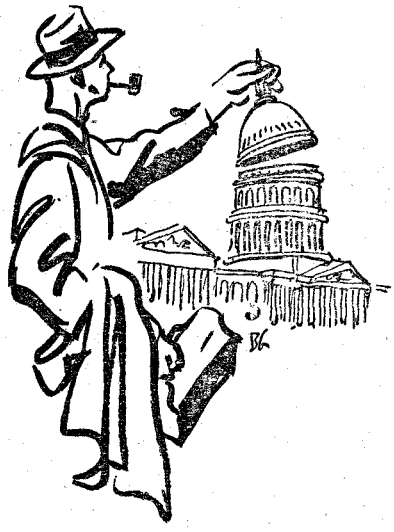
IN HIS economic report to Congress the President declared that while employment and national income were high, as they are today, it was sound public policy to provide for a budget surplus and reduction of the national debt. Practically all economists will agree, including those who are often charged with cherishing deficit financing for its own sake but who, in fact, view the budget as a mechanism for releasing purchasing power when inflation threatens and absorbing it when the danger is deflation.

There is, therefore, no controversy about Mr. Truman's attempt to keep expenditures within the limits of expected revenue. What is debatable, from our point of view, is the question whether within these limits he is giving the taxpayers the best value for their money. For every dollar of expenditure, we notice, just eight cents is allotted for social security, welfare, health, education and research, housing and community facilities. This seems a disproportionately small amount to spend on what are the most important and, in the long run, the most remunerative functions of government. In his Economic Report Mr. Truman pointed out that there is a direct connection between health and education on the one hand and labor efficiency and productivity on the other, and suggested that welfare programs should be integrated with proposals for maintaining general prosperity. Yet the fact is that all too many people regard welfare expenditure as a luxury and the first objective in any economy campaign.

This spirit, we are well aware, animates the President's Republican critics who complain that the budget has been balanced at far too high a level. Expenditure, they say, ought to be reduced by another four or five billion dollars, making possible not only debt repayment but the cut in taxes they have so recklessly promised. They are the men, they have lost no time in announcing, who are going to prune expenditure in really drastic fashion. This operation promises to be a fascinating, if unedifying, spectacle, for there is a good deal of disagreement among the surgeons about how to make their cuts without shedding too much political blood. Representative Taber, who comes from a safe Republican district in upper New York State, wants to use an ax; Senator Taft, whose ambitions necessitate a broader view of the national scene, promises more scientific methods.

Obviously, debt interest cannot be cut, and veterans' benefits will not be. Those two items account for about a third of the total expenditure contemplated by the President. The army and navy together will take almost another third. They are to have about $3½ billion less than in the current year and will certainly protest to Congress that they are cut to the bone. That, we believe, is not so; the War and Navy departments are the most extravagant of all the government agencies and would be all the better if deprived of superfluous flesh. Nevertheless, we shall be agreeably surprised if the Republicans make any effort to economize in this direction. Presidential hopeful Harold Stassen, we notice, while proposing that the budget be slashed by $5 billion declines to "substitute the judgment of our party for that of the military authorities." The same "liberal internationalist" wants to cut international expenditure by some 25 per cent. Since the bulk of the $3½ billion earmarked under this head represents credits already authorized, such as the British loan, occupation costs, and the expenses of the State Department, his proposal would mean practically no further foreign credits or relief grants.

Apart from a few hundred millions which might be



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saved on foreign assistance—at the risk of great suffering in many countries and of tremendous damage to our prestige—practically all the Republican cutting will have to be at the expense of the domestic agencies and departments. The following broad classifications together are estimated by the President to require $8,329,000,000 in fiscal 1948: social welfare, health and security; housing and community facilities; education and general research; agriculture; natural resources; transportation and communication; finance, commerce, and industry; labor; general government. How is nearly $5 billion to be saved on these activities without wrecking the government and imposing untold damage on the public interest?

The allowance for housing, for example—$539,000,000—is a few millions less than last year, when, as we know, little enough was done to solve what is perhaps the most immediately pressing of all social problems. How much dare the Republicans save on this item? Or take agriculture, scheduled to receive $1,381,000,000, or $264,000,000 more than last year. This includes $360,000,000 for support of farm prices under the war-time law pledging a 90 per cent parity price for a number of leading farm products. Many agricultural economists consider that this pledge will become operative in respect of some of our most important crops this year, and if they are right, the sum allotted is likely to prove too little rather than too much. What do the Republicans propose to do about this?

No doubt when they reach expenditures affecting groups less politically powerful than farmers, the Republicans will use their knives ruthlessly. But we do not believe that they can provide the pound of flesh that the N.A.M. has demanded. We suspect that they are going to face an awkward choice between responsibility for unbalancing the budget and reduction of their much-publicized tax cuts to token dimensions.

Mugwumps in Action

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

AMERICAN progressives are incorrigible mugwumps. They fight shy of party affiliations for the same reasons that the town freethinker shuns the church. Like most of their fellow-countrymen, they join organizations, but they prefer the short-term commitment, the specific issue, the lively fight—and then a quick retreat to everyday "personal" affairs. Politics isn't personal in America, unless you are a politician.

This temper of mind is one of the things that has prevented the growth of solid progressive political movements on a national scale, comparable to the Labor and Socialist movements in Britain and on the Continent. Profound or lasting changes in the party structure in this country have come about only in times of great economic stress, such as before the Civil War or the period when Populism, represented in modified form by William Jennings Bryan, captured the Democratic Party. Other national movements have spent themselves in a single unsuccessful foray.

Franklin D. Roosevelt adopted the Bryan strategy of attempting to dominate and use the Democratic machine. He was elected, however, not through the efforts of an organized progressive movement but by Herbert Hoover. The New Deal was depression's child. And the progressives who flocked to jobs in Washington, from Brain Trusters to clerks, were never really incorporated in the Democratic Party. Most of the prominent New Dealers looked upon themselves as guest artists, serving under the baton of Roosevelt while the show lasted.

Don't Fence Me In! might be the motto of the American progressive, and it defines his virtue as well as his weakness. But the bad results of this will to independence are visible today. The progressives are not only divided, they are heterogenous and without any philosophy or coherent program. Where their European counterparts too often get bogged down in doctrinaire factionalism, they form loose alliances to carry through specific reforms. Such alliances seldom make a lasting impact on the old parties.

These general remarks are intended to carry forward the ideas discussed in two earlier editorials on post-election politics. In the first I described the need for collective thinking on the left in order to create a positive program which does more than recapitulate the largely improvised measures that composed the New Deal. In the second I analyzed the difficulties in the way of new national parties, both under our laws and in the context of our habits. Since then the rise of two progressive or liberal organizations, the Progressive Citizens of America and the Americans for Democratic Action, has made an understanding of the anatomy of political movements in America even more essential, for the prospects of the new organizations will be determined in large measure by these basic biological factors.

It was inevitable, as it is certainly desirable, that the progressives should try to regroup their forces after the defeat of November. The consolidation of right-wing control in Congress and in the country is driving politically conscious liberals to make a defensive stand. What-

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ever either of the new groups may adopt by way of a positive program—and one has only to look at the variety of views represented in both to be sure their programs will be magnificently broad—their real job will be to organize resistance to the Taft-Vandenberg reaction. From tariffs and deals with Perón to laws hamstringing labor, the Republican Old Deal must be fought. It is a fight in which American progressives can unite, and should, if the war won in Europe and Asia is not to be lost in Washington. Even separately the new groups can doubtless do a fair job of lobbying and educating the public, and can mobilize some strength behind the efforts of the small bands of progressives still holding the front in Congress. This is their real job. For neither one looks like an embryo third party, and both, at this stage, disclaim the intention to become one. Nor is the time appropriate for such an effort.

They should be taken for what they are: typical progressive-action committees, imbued with generous liberal purposes; lacking any consistent economic policy and incapable, because of their amorphous nature, of formulating one; useful in a time when opposition is the primary need; not very important in terms of long-range left-wing planning. It is unfortunate that they cannot tackle the job under one name—and one overhead. The right is going to handle its internal disagreements more shrewdly, we can be sure. But American progressives are not only incorrigible mugwumps; they are mavericks as well, unbroken and unbranded.

The issue that divides the P. C. A. and the A. D. A. is not primarily one of program. Their central difference is on the issue of the Communists. The P. C. A., composed of the old Citizens' P. A. C. and the Independent Citizens' Committee, accepts as members everyone who supports its program, a category that includes Communists and all their allies. The A. D. A. repudiates this popular-front theory and rejects Communists and fellow-travelers as members. Since Communists usually don't wear buttons or other stigmata, the A. D. A. apparently hopes to make its exclusion act effective by writing specific anti-Communist points into its program. No doubt some party adherents will hop right over these verbal obstacles, but for the most part the A. D. A. will correspond, on a national scale, to the Liberal Party in New York.

The important factor in this division is its relationship to a similar change in the ranks of organized labor. The C. I. O., from its start a focus of Communist activity, is reacting strongly, union by union, against methods which have come to be regarded as diversive—to use a good party word—or at the very least irrelevant. This reaction is bound to affect a political organization like the Progressive Citizens, whose constituent committees, particularly the P. A. C., had cooperated intimately with the C. I. O. Many labor leaders and New Dealers previously close to the P. A. C. or the I. C. C.—and even some politicians who had gladly accepted support from those committees—were active participants in the Washington meeting which set up the Americans for Democratic Action. This demonstrated, I suspect, not merely the mercurial nature of progressives but also their desire for a political affiliation free from factional control of any sort. If this is what they achieved in Washington, the new organization should grow and flourish. Judging by Mr. Bendiner's enthusiastic report on another page, I fear they did not achieve just this.

But it is a fact that the two new organizations are so similar in purpose and in most of their personnel that their permanent separation seems as unnecessary as it is unfortunate. If the factional elements in both—a small fringe numerically—were eliminated, the committees could certainly work together on a common program of energetic opposition to the gang now in power in the country. The hope of this sort of cooperation is dimmed, unfortunately, by the presence in the P. C. A. of genuine Communist sympathizers who, whether they control the organization or not, would naturally resist a realignment that excluded them; and in the A. D. A. of a group who believe that communism and fascism are indistinguishable and equally to be fought. It was perhaps in deference to this group that the A. D. A. program issued to the press contained such phrases as, "We reject any association with Communists or sympathizers with communism in the United States as completely as we reject any association with fascists or their sympathizers." To many non-Communists, among them myself, a program which equates Communists with Fascists and proposes that this country should direct its help to "democratic and freedom-loving people" distorts the meaning of history and the plain lesson of present-day realities. It is hard to believe that such sweeping implications will be allowed to remain when the full program is worked out by the organizing committee for this body has on it many first-rate and balanced progressives.

It should be possible, if the counsels of leaders like Eleanor Roosevelt prevail, to unite or coordinate the activities of the most effective forces in the two organizations. Before the lines of demarcation become too tightly drawn, while many individuals of like minds are still active in both groups, I urge that informal, private talks be held among the leaders to try to effect a union—or at the very least a method of liaison between the P. C. A. and the A. D. A. which will eliminate only those few, at both ends of the line, who prefer factional infighting in support of their own interests to common action against the new Old Deal.

[*Miss Kirchwey will be away for several weeks on a holiday. After her return, she will continue the political discussion with an article on the Premises of a Progressive Program.*]

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What Will Your Dollar Buy in 1947?

BY SIMON O. LESSER

Washington, January 13

BUSINESS must immediately lower prices if our present prosperity is to be maintained in 1947. That is the basic thesis of President Truman's surprisingly courageous Economic Report, the first to be made to Congress under the Employment Act of 1946. The report also stresses the need for industrial peace, selective wage adjustments, and various legislative measures designed to increase buying power. But lower prices are singled out as the primary imperative of the present economic situation.

Stripped of mumbo-jumbo, the reason for expecting a business recession in 1947 is that prices are so high, and some prices so out of line with others, as to retard consumption. That was not fatal so long as replenishment of inventories was helping to absorb goods. But sooner or later it will mean falling demand, lower production, fewer jobs—the whole downward cycle which spells recession, or worse.

The need for lower prices has been acknowledged by the United States Chamber of Commerce and other business groups and emphasized by many economists. Even the National Association of Manufacturers, which was huffing and puffing for higher prices only a little while ago, has suddenly recalled the economic advantages of low prices. But such tardy admissions—all too obviously intended to prejudice labor's demands—are hardly a reliable guaranty that price slashes are imminent. The $64 question is: Will business reduce prices soon enough and sharply enough to stave off a recession, or shall we get more favorable prices only *through* a recession, with all its attendant unemployment and suffering?

Price decreases, because they would be felt by everyone, would be even more effective than wage increases in bolstering purchasing power and maintaining prosperity, as probably most labor leaders would privately agree. They are fighting for higher wages because it is unrealistic to expect price decreases and they think that the only way to get a better balance between prices, profits, and wages is to exert pressure where it will be felt—on the wage front. A one-year moratorium on wage and price increases, as proposed by Charles E. Wilson of General Electric, would hardly meet the requirements of the situation. What is needed—and soon—is higher wages or lower prices, or a combination of the two.

For some companies this will mean slimmer profit margins. But with sales at the present levels, margins can in most cases be pared considerably and still yield very satisfactory dollar profits. A reduction in the present abnormally large margins does not seem too high a price to ask business to pay to avert a setback from which it would suffer along with everyone else.

Excessive profits are one of the chief causes of business depressions: they reduce the buying power of most consumers and give the few more money than they can either spend or invest productively. It is a matter of record that a very high level of corporate profits generally presages trouble. It did in the 1920's and again in 1936-37. And despite what they say for public consumption, business men are uneasily aware that present high margins cannot be maintained indefinitely. That is one of the reasons current profits are being appraised so conservatively in the stock market.

To be sure, business has not yet become sufficiently uneasy to adopt the pricing policies that would help sustain our present precarious prosperity. Is there any reason for thinking that it will be ready to do so this year? I believe it will, but anyone foolhardy enough to make economic predictions is entitled to a little hedging, and I hasten to add that the balance is so delicate it could easily tilt either way. There are good grounds for expecting business to initiate sounder pricing policies. But it is anyone's guess whether the adjustments will be prompt enough and large enough.

There are always certain pressures which make a business firm seek the highest prices the traffic will bear, whether or not such a policy is in the public interest or in its own long-range interest. These pressures are among the most important influences at work in our economy and are worthy of far more study than they have received. The "profit motive" is compounded not simply of the desire for gain, but of what sometimes seems an almost panicky fear of the future. Such fear is understandable enough in an economy of rapid technological change and sharp cyclical ups and downs, but it often has pernicious effects: the large sums each firm feels it necessary to put in reserve against future contingencies may, in the aggregate, help to precipitate the difficulties feared. Yet we all—the public at large, as well as stock-

SIMON LESSER was in the domestic branch of the OWI during the war, working on information about economic stabilization, and after the war was with the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion. He is the coauthor, with Dr. George A. Works, of "Rural America Today—Its Schools and Community Life."

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holders and bankers—tend to judge a management not only by how much it makes but by the "conservatism" of its financial practices.

Under normal circumstances the urge to seek the highest possible profits is held in check by competition. Business men know that if they overprice their product they run the risk of losing sales to competitors, freezing out marginal consumers, and making fewer dollars—even though profit *margins* may be satisfactory—than they might at a lower price level. But in 1946 the competitive pressures which would normally restrain a firm from overpricing its goods were almost entirely absent. By and large, business had an assured market for all the goods it could produce. Demand was so urgent that price became a secondary consideration. Supply, furthermore, was rigidly limited by the shortage of materials, reconversion difficulties, and the necessity of filling the distribution pipe lines.

Other forces were also at work in the immediate post-war period which made business less responsible in its pricing policies than it normally is. During the war patriotism had acted as a brake on selfishness, and the relationship between various groups in the economy —business, workers, and farmers—remained relatively static. Peace disturbed this nice balance and inclined us—in a sense forced us—to think again in terms of our own self-interest. Each group began to maneuver for a favorable position in the post-war economy. In this environment business was in no mood to try to absorb higher wages or to see how closely it could price its goods.

As a matter of fact, it appears that even during the war many firms were getting set for a killing when peace came. Despite the importance of economic stabilization, and despite the fact that net profits would have been little affected by more conservative pricing, business in general set prices on both war supplies and civilian goods which yielded extremely large gross profits. Renegotiation and the excess-profits tax whittled these down, and the question arises why business did not content itself with lower gross margins in the first place. Granting that prices on some war supplies were set high because of the difficulty of estimating costs accurately, a strong presumption remains that the major factor was the desire to perpetuate a price structure which promised huge profits when the excess-profits tax was repealed.

There are, after all, two ways of looking at profits in a period of high production. To persons concerned with the continuing health of the economy, it seems reasonable to expect business to limit its "take"—and imperative that it do so if prosperity is to be sustained. But some business men may look at it differently: "If we can't make good profits in times like these, when can we?" During the war many concerns chafed at their inability to carry high gross profits down to net; they were determined to earn greater net profits once the war was won.

Box Score on Price Prospects

Food

After a sharp rise in the months following the end of control, food prices moved downward between November 15 and December 15. This decline, and the recent weakness in many wholesale markets, may indicate lower food prices in 1947. By the middle of the year, if production continues high, lessened foreign demand combined with static domestic demand should cause farm prices to weaken. If we are to avoid a recession, it is extremely important that these declines find rapid and full reflection in retail food prices. About 40 per cent of the budget of low-income families goes for food; lower food prices mean more money for buying other things.

Clothing and Textiles

In 1947 the consumer will benefit in two important ways. Staple items, such as moderate-price shirts and slips, will be available in larger quantities; so that it won't be necessary to take expensive substitutes. And the quality of clothing and other textile products, particularly "low-end" merchandise, will improve. Actual price reductions will be sharpest at the upper end of the price scale, where they have least significance for the average consumer. In the middle and lower price ranges reductions on some items will be offset until midyear by firm and even rising prices for such things as shoes and men's suits.

Durable Goods

The best that can be hoped for until the middle of the year is that the prices of most products in this class will stay where they are. Demand is strong. Steel, copper, and lead prices have been recently raised. Additional wage increases are in prospect. For some time longer certain materials will remain in short supply. However, production difficulties are gradually being overcome and labor productivity is rising. By summer a number of consumer durables may be cheaper—prices of table radios and electric irons have already been shaded—and consumers will find it easier to buy standard models.

Rents

Despite President Truman's plea for the extension of rent control, a 5 to 15 per cent increase in rents may be authorized at any time. It will be a miracle if rent control is continued much longer, and even if it is, some increase in rents is almost a certainty.

Houses

The scrapping of the Wyatt housing program means that fewer of the homes to be constructed in 1947 will be in the lower and middle price range. But the cost of building a house of a given quality will not be subject to much further increase and by late spring may begin to decline. The prices of expensive existing houses have already reached the top, and prices in all ranges may be expected to begin a slow decline as more new houses are finished.

After the war, too, some elements of the business community were willing to go to any lengths to weaken and discredit labor. This tendency, as much as the desire

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for profit, explains the fantastic insistence of various leaders not only that wage increases always necessitate price increases but that prices must be raised *by the same amount,* as if wages were the only element in the cost of production.

These influences will obviously be by no means absent from the 1947 scene. General Motors' Charles E. Wilson is still maintaining that a 25 per cent increase in wages means a 25 per cent increase in the price of cars. But I believe that in 1947 far fewer business men will be disposed to talk this way or to dramatize the nefarious effect of wage increases by hiking up prices again. And I think it improbable that labor will press for pay raises likely to be used to justify higher prices. Another favorable factor is that business is in an even better position to absorb wage increases this year than last, when many firms were experiencing reconversion difficulties. Production is high and profit margins are ample. The main reason, however, for expecting business to follow more conservative pricing policies in 1947 is simply that competition is going to make itself felt again.

At the same time that more goods become available, demand will taper off. For certain kinds of luxury goods —furs, expensive sport clothes, jewelry, three-dollar men's shorts, and high-priced houses—a weakening of demand is already evident. The lists of persons willing to buy new homes or automobiles regardless of price are growing rapidly shorter. All during 1947 and afterward there will be plenty of people eager for such products, but some will be unable to enter the market at all and the others will be more price-conscious. Under these conditions companies will begin to worry again about selling all they can make—and prices will tend to drop.

Of course, this shift in the supply-demand balance could lead not simply to more rational pricing but to the feared recession. But it looks now as if not all types of goods would experience a weakened demand at the same time; the demand for some products—textiles may be the first—will falter, while that for others continues strong. If things work out in this happy fashion, and if, in addition, each industry affected responds to a decline in demand almost before it is manifested in the market place, we can avoid a "bust" in 1947. Demand for capital goods, export demand, and the high level of construction activity in prospect will be bolstering influences throughout the year.

Revolt of the Middle

BY ROBERT BENDINER

WHEN Franklin D. Roosevelt died, nearly two years ago, the progressive forces of the United States went into a retreat that by last November 6 had reached the proportions of a near-rout. With the creation of Americans for Democratic Action in Washington on January 4, that retreat, I believe, came to a halt. It may be a long while before the lost ground is regained, and we may well have to go through hard times again before the right is unseated, but the counter-attack, I think, will be said to have dated from this occasion. If it is sustained enough and sufficiently supported, we shall not merely return to the New Deal but begin where the New Deal left off.

If this interpretation of the A. D. A.'s organizing conference sounds a bit lyrical, it is because I think we have here something new in the history of American politics —a movement on the left that is free of the orthodoxies of Marxism and yet looks clearly beyond the anarchy of what, by rote rather than by reason, is called "free enterprise"; a movement that is neither the projection of one man's personality nor the organized promotion of an economic cure-all; and, finally, a group that, being genuinely committed to political as well as economic democracy, is neither inspired by the Communists nor open to their manipulation.

This is a combination for which politically mature Americans have long been waiting—a movement that, in Reinhold Niebuhr's telling phrase, drives toward freedom within a framework of security and security within a framework of freedom. We have made countless false starts in this country in conscious or unconscious pursuit of this political Grail. Aside from the Socialists, these movements have been the kind of one-man operation that bound the Bull Moose to Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressives to the elder La Follette, and, in a sense, the New Deal to Franklin Roosevelt. Or they have been organizations for the promotion of an economic nostrum, like the wild money of the Populists. Or, more recently, they have been "popular-front" groups, addressing themselves to particular issues as they arose, and with no more underlying core of belief than one could expect from memberships that ranged all the way from Communist Party officials to Republicans of good-will.

For lack of alternatives, Americans with decent social instincts have been joining these front organizations, on and off, over the past two decades, and always with the same result. Whether or not they achieved this or that immediate purpose, they inevitably found themselves, in a matter of months, in an unenviable position. They

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could defend the Communists who invariably run such groups, strictly for their own purposes and with a program subject to change without notice; they could avert their eyes from such stark reality and, having been fooled into joining in the first place, go on deceiving themselves indefinitely; or they could get out, embittered and with no place to go. The Communists, for their part, continued in this way to pick up adherents, or at least defenders; while the liberals, gradually bereft of a principled movement of their own, merely went on dividing on the question of whether or not to cooperate with the Communists. Some abandoned every principle of liberalism to plump for the comrades without accepting the onus of a party card; others developed an obsession on the subject and saw every issue in terms of how to oppose the Communists; and a few went about with a micrometer to measure the obsession of their fellows and a compass and sextant for charting their personal course through the shoals.

The net result of all this fitful fever was that the Communists made appreciable advances toward the realization of what has become the immediate objective of both political extremes everywhere: to destroy the middle, and thereby to impose on the world a choice between communism and fascism.

Too many liberals, tired, discouraged, and with no place to go, have come perilously close to accepting the choice. They point, for example, to the absence of an established social democratic tradition in parts of Europe and Asia as a valid reason for supporting Communist domination in those areas. As though that tradition could ever come into being without the freedom to make its own false starts and tentative gropings; as though it would ever be given a chance to make such starts under the steadily hardening mold of the police state. One may, of course, have legitimate reasons to prefer the Communists and to resent a formula that equates the two extremes, but this seems to me irrelevant and certainly not an issue. The police state, both Communist and fascist, is a slave state. A slave may have his preference of masters, but the question of choice is a strange preoccupation for men determined to keep their freedom.

The A. D. A. unequivocally rejects this choice, and in so doing it brings to an end a shoddy era in the history of American progressivism. It serves notice on both extremes that social democracy is not ready for self-liquidation, that it has, in fact, a dynamism of its own, rooted in conviction and capable of contending for the minds of men.

Aspiring to more than the kind of *ad hoc* activity that concerns itself solely with bills on the Congressional calendar, the A. D. A. deliberately refrained from rushing before the public with a detailed platform. That will be worked out carefully in the weeks ahead, but the basic principles on which it will be based were laid down by the initiating conference. In essence, these principles, and the attitude that I heard expressed on all sides, point to a vast expansion of the New Deal in all its phases and to political and economic support for social democratic forces throughout the world. Significantly, it was the British Labor Party that came in for informal eulogy at the conference, and even more significant was the new note that was sounded on the subject of social change via the state. Civil liberties, the conference warned, must be protected not only from "concentrated wealth" but also from "overcentralized government." It is not too much, I think, to read in this an appreciation of the narrow gap between socialism and the all-powerful state; an indication that the A. D. A. conscious of the experiences of European socialism, seeks that combination of public ownership and democratic local controls that have been the glory of the TVA.

When the Union for Democratic Action called the January 4 conference, out of which the A. D. A. emerged, it expected nothing like the overwhelming response and attention it received, and nothing like the far-reaching results. What started out to be a small closed meeting on how the defeated progressives might best proceed turned into the spontaneous launching of a movement that must hearten the non-Communist left everywhere. The genuine enthusiasm of top leaders of the C. I. O., the A. F. of L., and other mass organizations gives promise of that broad base without which little can be accomplished. The equal enthusiasm of the most militant and far-seeing of Roosevelt's New Deal lieutenants, and of independent progressives of unquestioned stature, relates the movement closely to the powerful political currents of the country.

The newly formed Progressive Citizens of America, by way of contrast, is a traditional popular-front organization, that is, an aggregation of people whose fundamental aims are irreconcilable. It is in the tradition of a fast fading era, and, with or without the support of Henry A. Wallace, I believe it is already anchored in a political backwater. American progressives have rediscovered their own character and purpose. They are ready to put forth a dynamic program of their own and to provide leadership. And they reject utterly the choice of totalitarian extremes.

HOMELESS AMERICA

A number of our readers have asked for additional copies of Charles Abrams's series of articles on housing. An expanded version of the series is available in a pamphlet published by the League for Industrial Democracy, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

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The Republicans and the First Freedom

BY BRYANT PUTNEY

Washington, January 13

BY A quick job of hatchet work, plus a neat double-cross, Republican leaders in the Senate have managed to head off what would have been the first thoroughgoing Congressional inquiry ever conducted into the economic forces limiting a truly free press in America. The day after the new Congress convened Senators Taft and White of the Republican Steering Committee, aided by the ubiquitous Senator Wherry, forced the cancelation of hearings scheduled for this week before the Senate Small Business Committee on "obstacles to free competition" in the newspaper and magazine industries.

Monopoly of the printed word is, of course, the most dangerous monopoly of all. As such it is at any time a proper subject for Congressional attention. Right now an investigation is the more urgent because, to quote Chairman James Murray of the Small Business Committee, "small dailies and weeklies face more serious threats to their existence than ever before."

The hearings were originally scheduled for last December but were postponed by Senator Murray until January 7 at the request of Wherry, a member of the committee. Wherry promised Murray his full support and assured him there would be no Republican interference. On January 4 Wherry conferred with Taft and White on the Senate floor, then walked across the aisle to inform the astonished Murray that the hearings would again be postponed, this time until after the committee's future has been decided by the Senate.

Two circumstances illuminate the motives of the Republicans. One is that the large newspaper and magazine publishers, the national advertisers, the newsprint manufacturers, and other big publishing interests have looked upon the proposed investigation with a jaundiced eye from the start, although they have not openly opposed it. The other is that Senator Murray is known to be a man who does not pull his punches. As a liberal from a state where all the larger dailies except one are either owned outright or controlled by the Anaconda Copper Company, Murray has good reason to know the ominous power of a press dominated by big business. Replies to questionnaires he sent last year to 10,000 newspapers scattered over the country have convinced him that this power is growing rapidly. "Small papers," he says, "are caught right now in a terrible squeeze, which many of them may not survive. Their costs are steadily rising, but they cannot expand their advertising or circulation because they don't have the paper for it."

The newsprint shortage—caused mainly by increased demand resulting from improved economic conditions in this country and rising literacy here and abroad—is being used to extend monopoly control in the publishing industry. Yet already 200 large users consume 85 per cent of the country's newsprint, and the small supply remaining must be parceled out among the 24,800 small newspapers and magazines registered at the Post Office Department for the second-class mailing privilege. During the war, quota regulations on newsprint gave small publishers some protection against unfair distribution of the limited stocks. But since the abandonment of inventory and price controls last year, newsprint prices have skyrocketed, and the jobbers who supply small consumers are being cut off by the big paper companies so that the increasing wants of large users can be met.

The newspaper and magazine chains and the large independent publishers have an immense advantage over their small competitors in the contest for newsprint. Most of them have long-term contracts with American and Canadian paper companies—over three-fourths of all our newsprint comes from Canada—under which they can buy their entire requirements direct from the producer. At least thirty big independent and chain publishers have their own pulp mills and in some cases their own timber lands. A recent news item in *Editor and Publisher* illustrates the trend. Norman Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles *Times*, one of the largest papers west of the Mississippi River, is lining up thirty West Coast publishers to raise 5 per cent of the cost of a $28,000,000 newsprint mill to be built at Thomas Bay, Alaska. Although 95 per cent of the cost is to be financed by "outside capital," the publishers will contract to buy the mill's output for the next fifteen years. Said *Editor and Publisher*: "Although the output is not necessarily limited to these publishers, it is believed their demands will absorb the full production." Small papers please copy.

Even before the war the Federal Trade Commission considered the newsprint situation serious enough to warrant an exhaustive study. Its report, completed in 1939 and then suppressed, details the steady concentration of control in a few big paper companies and the growth of vertical combinations through publishers' purchases of newsprint-producing facilities.

Fear that the newsprint quota system might be revived in this country—it is still in force in Britain—was one of the principal reasons why the big publishers and advertisers heaved a collective sigh of relief when the Republicans scuttled the Murray investigation. But there were other reasons. The publishers don't have to dig into their morgues to recall what happened as a result of Charles Evans Hughes's inquiry into the practices of life-

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insurance companies, the Pecora banking probe, and a long list of similar investigations.

The first witness scheduled to appear before the Murray committee was Morris Ernst, one of the country's leading crusaders against monopoly control of our national media of communication. Ernst's book "The First Freedom," published last year, traces the frightening growth of such control over press, radio, and movies, and suggests means for curbing it. The prospect that his views might gain wider currency as a result of the proposed investigation threw a bad scare into the big publishing firms. Among the reforms Ernst proposes is a requirement that all the facts of newspaper and magazine ownership be fully disclosed; it is next to impossible at present to find out who really controls large sections of the press. Ernst believes also that the second-class mailing privilege should be revised to aid small publishers. Why, he asks, should the biggest subsidies go to the biggest publications, which are best able to pay their own way? He proposes that small publishers be encouraged through enactment of a law under which papers would be carried free up to a certain minimum circulation.

Officially of course the newspaper monopoly has merely been postponed—"until further notice." The Republicans may decide later to go through the motions and conduct some sort of whitewash proceedings. But no one here believes that in this event Senator Wherry can be depended on to carry out the original purpose of the inquiry—"to determine what can be done to preserve the vitality of the smaller newspapers of the nation."

Montgomery in Moscow

BY ALEXANDER WERTH

Moscow, January 10

THIS week's greatest event is of course the Montgomery visit. Nobody thinks of it as epoch-making, but it is hailed as symptomatic of the present drift toward greater good-will among the war-time allies. Monty is doing his stuff proudly. He smiles and bows and seems to be enjoying himself thoroughly in this strange atmosphere, surrounded by Marshals Vasilevsky, Konev, and Govorov, Tank Marshal Rybalko, and other soldiers whose professional qualities and war records he certainly respects and admires. "Nothing but the greatest good can come of such contacts between war-time comrades," he said, and he was most gratified that his invitation to Vasilevsky and the other members of the Soviet High Command to visit England in the spring or early summer was promptly accepted. In a world where there is so much nervous talk, especially in Germany and in those other countries where people are banking on the "inevitable" conflict between East and West, the mutual cordiality displayed is bound to have a salutary effect.

The visit was undoubtedly more successful than it would have been a few months ago owing to the agreement on the peace treaties with the satellites, by which the United Nations session has on balance proved its usefulness, and Bevin's recent conciliatory speech, the friendliest gesture he has made toward Russia in his whole career as Foreign Minister. Montgomery also took a line which pleased the Russians—that his visit was of exactly the same nature as his visit to the United States and "Ike's" to England. His speech paying tribute to the Red Army and expressing a desire to establish close bonds with it made an excellent impression, especially since, perhaps by coincidence, it came right on top of a *Pravda* article repeating rumors about a secret Anglo-American alliance and arms standardization. The article took issue sharply with a British newspaper which had declared the Anglo-American alliance the best safeguard for world peace; *Pravda's* rejoinder was that the best safeguard was the United Nations.

One cannot help being amused by certain reports published abroad which seem to have tried to give readers what they would expect to hear about "Montgomery in Moscow." Thus it was said that the Bolshoi Theater, where Montgomery, accompanied by Russian marshals, saw Prokofief's "Romeo and Juliet" with Ulanova dancing, was "packed with uniforms." Actually there was the same sprinkling of uniforms in the theater as on any other night, and no more. The overwhelming majority of the audience were civilians who had come first and foremost to see Ulanova dance. In the intermission one diplomat observed, "It is a pretty healthy country where the public doesn't go into a wild frenzy whenever some generals show up."

It was interesting to see that Marshal Sokolovsky, commander of the Soviet forces in Germany, was in Montgomery's box. The meeting of the two men suggests strongly that questions connected with the future cooperation of the Allied forces in Germany may have been discussed in a general way—not in detail, for Montgomery brought no experts with him. Any agreement on purely military matters may be regarded as a small but

ALEXANDER WERTH is special correspondent in Moscow for The Nation, *the Manchester* Guardian, *and the British Broadcasting Corporation.*

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useful preliminary to the Foreign Ministers' conference here in March.

There is evidence that the Russians do not consider the German problem insoluble, difficult as the going will be for the peace discussions. Russian comments on the merger of the British and American zones are symptomatic and may perhaps be viewed as promising. A recent *Izvestia* article stressed the fact that Russia has always favored the political and economic unity of Germany and said the real objection to the Anglo-American agreement was that Russia had been left out; when that agreement was made, the Soviet Union's position was misunderstood. This indicates the line the Russians are likely to follow. While the article was in places highly critical of the Anglo-American denazification policy and the interest big business has shown in preserving the industrial strength of western Germany, it could not be called truculent. And as a whole, at any rate by implication, it was constructive. It hoped that the Foreign Ministers' conference would not be confronted with too many *faits accomplis* in western Germany; the virtual incorporation of the Saar into France, for example, was not welcomed here.

Meanwhile Russia and the other fifteen Soviet republics are preparing to elect the members of their respective Supreme Soviets on February 9. I do not suppose there is any doubt that the outcome of the elections will be an overwhelming victory for the Communist and non-party bloc. The Russian argument is, of course: Why have competing parties when we are all agreed on the fundamentals? But aside from being a reaffirmation of the practically 100 per cent loyalty of the Soviet people to their regime, the election is important as part of another great ideological and production drive.

The centers of this drive are so-called *agitpunkts,* or agitation points, scattered thickly over the country—in Moscow there is one in almost every street. They are usually a room decorated with banners and with portraits of party leaders and supplied with papers and pamphlets on the latest topical subjects, where anyone can drop in for a few hours of reading or conversation with the person in charge. Here also the part-time "agitators" of the district meet and are given the main lines of their talks with the voters. Then in factories, shops, and even in private houses, the agitators discourse on the Soviet constitution—"the fairest and most democratic of all constitutions"—and teach the candidates how to deal with "housewives' questions" concerning ration cards, housing, damaged plumbing, and other more or less personal matters. Some candidates take a good deal of trouble to show that they are closely concerned with their constituents' immediate problems.

After the nomination of candidates, as the result often of lengthy parleys between the local trade-union, the party, the Komsomol, and other committees, numerous election meetings are held and the voters are exhorted to work hard to carry out the Five-Year Plan. "Back to 1940" may be said to be the first objective, and "Onward to 1950" the next. In the consciousness of rank-and-file Russians 1940 is something concrete—a year in which, after all the ups and downs of more than twenty years of revolution, the wheels of industry, trade, and distribution were at last turning well. This was a period when there were few bottlenecks, when transport was efficient, and when food and clothes were becoming less and less of a problem for the Soviet citizen.

Although Bevin's speech of December 22 was generally welcomed, it contained one passage which must have sounded strange to even the least optimistic Soviet citizen: "Soviet Russia, which evolved an entirely different system but which has been invaded and suffered terrible destruction that has undone practically the whole of the great economic work she accomplished between the Revolution and Hitler's attack, has now to re-create herself again." This is clearly an enormous exaggeration, for it amounts to saying that Russia is practically back at the 1914 level. There was great destruction, notably in the Ukraine, of much that was built in Soviet times, but immense industrial power had been built up in other parts of the Soviet Union which suffered no destruction. With the intensive training of man-power, the weak point in Russian industry, it is expected that the factories in these regions will soon be running full blast again. No doubt the restoration of transport and of the devastated areas will take longer, but in two or three years everybody is expecting something approaching a return to the 1940 level in most parts of the Soviet Union.

A question asked by some Russians is whether there is not a tendency to go from one extreme to another. Whereas in early 1945 Russia was the colossus casting its shadow over the whole of Europe and Asia, the tendency now is to think of Russia as a terribly weakened country—industrially as well as militarily. Both ideas are baseless. There is hardship, which has been accentuated by the bad harvest; there is a labor shortage. But fundamentally there is nothing seriously wrong, and there are no insuperable obstacles to the country's fairly rapid recovery. The technical cadres are there, and recruits to skilled labor are being rapidly trained. There is nothing even remotely reminiscent of the economic and social chaos of, say, 1918, when Russia had to start almost from zero. What puzzles Russians who see the foreign, and especially the American, press is that the great majority of these publications no longer report facts about Russia but spend their whole time sneering. One Russian comment I heard was: "They are so happy sneering that they have stopped taking any intelligent interest in our country at all."

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The People's Front

LAST week I discussed the continuing contest for world leadership between the capitalist nations and those of socialist tendency and the impact on American foreign policy. A few days ago the John Day Company published a book by Fritz Sternberg, "The Coming Crisis," which adds an important new argument to my thesis. Sternberg points out that if the rivalry between the nations which represent the past and those which are striving toward a new society has been intense in a period of prosperity, the capitalist countries will find the going even more difficult in a period of economic crisis. And as the title of his book implies, he believes the United States is approaching just such a period. Clearly his warning cannot be dismissed by any cheerful admonition, such as that of Studebaker's President Hoffman, that talk of a crash in this country is "un-American."

People tend to think of economic crises in terms of the boom-bust cycle that has characterized the last hundred years of capitalist growth in America. There may be a depression in 1948 or 1950, they say, but afterward will come an inevitable period of prosperity. Perhaps the most important contribution of Sternberg's book is to question the validity of this concept. He shows that the 1929 crisis never really ended until a war economy had been established—in Germany considerably before the outbreak of hostilities and in the United States after the war in Europe was under way. And he suggests that when the next crisis comes, the capitalist world will adopt the only solution that proved effective before.

If Sternberg's thesis is correct—and he buttresses it with a good deal of economic data intelligently interpreted—the political implications are terrific. In 1932 the Republican Party paid for its lack of initiative and imagination in 1929; it lost the election to Roosevelt and the New Deal. In the light of this costly experience, the Republicans may very well seek an escape from unemployment and idle factories by shifting to a war economy. This somber possibility explains in part why certain European nations which at the end of hostilities were strongly attracted by the idea of economic ties with the United States have lost their enthusiasm.

THE other evening I went to a private preview of "Man's Hope," a film André Malraux made in Spain in 1938, during the war. As a member of the Spanish Cabinet in charge of propaganda services in those days, I can testify that this movie is the very antithesis of a Hollywood production. It is a simple, direct account, without a trace of melodrama, of a single episode in the war. The actors are the Spanish people themselves—army officers, *milicianos*, *campesinos*—the common men of freedom's battle. "Man's Hope" records not only the injustice perpetrated against them by America's embargo and Britain's non-intervention policy but also the magnificent courage of the Republican fighters. No written page could have reproduced so faithfully, so starkly, the tragedy of Spain.

At the end of the performance a well-known radio commentator remarked to me, "They should have shown this at Lake Success." The episode recounted in "Man's Hope" shows the absurdity of trying to end the Spanish drama with a vaudeville skit in which a caretaker regime approved by international reaction takes power in Madrid. Perhaps after seeing it, Mr. Van Kleffens or Senator Connally might answer, "But that all happened during the war. Now nine years have passed and the Spaniards are hungry. Give them a halfway reasonable government and the possibility of buying food abroad, and the matter will be settled."

True, nine years have passed—and they are another piece of evidence against those who helped establish Franco in power—but it would be easy to bring the film up to date by simply inserting two recent episodes of the Spanish resistance. They took place last month and have been related by an important British business man just arrived in New York from Madrid. He has spent most of his life in Spain and is appalled by the stupidity of Anglo-American diplomacy. Here are the stories:

One of the directors of the Bank of Spain, a friend of the Englishman, returned to Madrid after a visit to his country estate in Andalusia. Through some mix-up his chauffeur failed to meet the train; so the banker took a taxi from the station. "Nice weather we're having," he remarked to the driver by way of conversation. "Here we don't talk about the weather but about hunger," was the reply. "Well, in a few months things will be better; a lot of food is coming in from Argentina," said the banker. The driver gave him a grim look: "Things will be better the day we hang Franco. And if you want to call a policeman, go ahead—I'll tell him the same thing." Somewhat disconcerted, the banker cast around for a safer subject. It was close to Christmas, and the idea occurred to him that he might make at least one Spanish family happy. He handed the driver a five-hundred-peseta note and said, "For your kids." The driver pointed to the meter: "The fare is fourteen pesetas, and the usual tip if you like. We Republicans cannot be bought."

The British business man witnessed the second incident himself while motoring in the Sierra de Guadarrama near Madrid. Suddenly a band of men armed with machine-guns and pistols surged down from the hills and stopped the three cars ahead of him. The motorists were forced to hand over whatever money they were carrying, several thousand pesetas in all. "Now," said the man in command, "your names." The names were taken. Each of the tourists received a small piece of paper on which was written:

> Received from Mr.—— . . . pesetas.
> To be returned after the restoration of the Republic.
> [*Signed*] The Army of Liberation

"Only idiots," I am quoting the Englishman, "can possibly believe that the problem will be solved by imposing a wretched little king and a puppet regime on the people of Spain."

DEL VAYO

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Crude Oil Politics

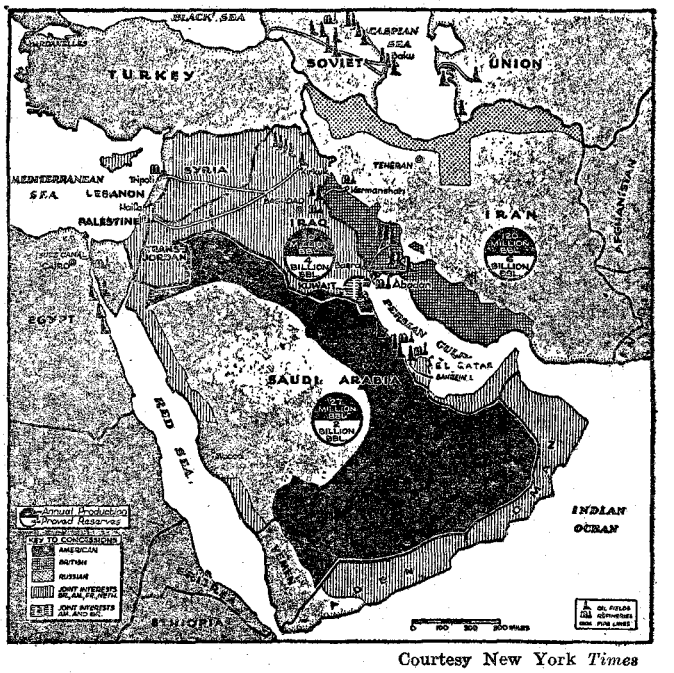
By KEITH HUTCHISON

IN 1943 E. L. De Golyer, the distinguished oil geologist, reported to the Department of the Interior that the center of gravity of world oil production was moving from the Gulf of Mexico–Caribbean area to the Persian Gulf. That shift will be rapidly accelerated by two pending deals which will make available to the worldwide marketing organizations of Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum immense quantities of Arabian and Iranian petroleum and so displace a large part of the Venezuelan production now sold by these companies in Europe. But even more important than the economic implications of these deals are their political consequences, for they suggest that the United States has become the senior member of the partnership which rules the oily destinies of the Middle East.

For a good many months negotiations have been in progress between Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum on the one hand and Standard Oil of California and the Texas Company, joint owners of a vast, rich, and rapidly developing concession in Saudi Arabia, on the other. While final details have still to be arranged, it appears that an agreement has been reached which will give the New Jersey concern a 30 per cent and Socony a 10 per cent interest in the Arabian-American Company —the subsidiary through which the California and Texas companies are exploiting the concession. The advantage to the sellers in this transaction is perhaps primarily financial; they are believed to have spent some $150,000,000 on development and will need at least as much more to build the projected pipe line across the Arabian desert to the Mediterranean. The practically unlimited resources of the two top Rockefeller concerns which are now joining them should insure against any financial difficulties in raising the required capital. In addition, the political reinforcement that the alliance provides probably proved an important consideration.

To Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony the agreement offers a stake in what may turn out to be one of the most prolific oil fields of all time. Even more important, it assures them of a large supply of oil to feed to their distributing subsidiaries around the world. It is true that Standard of New Jersey owns a major share of Venezuelan oil, the chief source of supply for Europe at present. But rising demand in the Western Hemisphere, coupled with the possibility of lagging production in the United States, may mean that Caribbean supplies will be absorbed by nearer markets. Meanwhile the New Jersey company cannot draw on its fields in Austria, Hungary, and Rumania, which, for the time being at least, are under Soviet control, and Socony is handicapped by difficulties in the Netherlands East Indies that are retarding the reconstruction of its properties there. From Irak, their only assured Middle Eastern supply until the new agreements become effective, the two companies are obtaining 10,000 barrels a day each—a drop in the bucket compared with average consumption outside the United States and Russia of some 2,400,000 barrels daily.

This unassuaged thirst for oil suggests at least a partial explanation for the second deal, which provides for the purchase by the same two American companies of a large but unspecified quantity of the Anglo-Iranian



Courtesy New York *Times*

Company's production and for their participation in the construction of yet another trans-Arabian pipe line if terms can be arranged with the Arab rulers through whose territory it will pass. I say partial explanation, since it is possible that Anglo-Iranian pressed for a long-term contract of this kind as a quid pro quo for its approval of the Arabian-American deal.

Its bargaining power stemmed from the American desire to abrogate the "Red Line Agreement," which was signed in 1928 by all the participants in the Irak Petroleum Company. These consist of the four following national groups—the Near East Development Company (controlled jointly by New Jersey and Socony), the D'Arcy Exploration Company (controlled by Anglo-Iranian), the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company (controlled by Royal Dutch-Shell), and the Compagnie Française des Pétroles (controlled by the French government). Each of these groups owns 23¾ per cent of Irak Petroleum, the remaining 5 per cent being in the hands of a rather mysterious Armenian gentleman named Gulbenkian, who

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obtained the original Mosul concession from the Turks and has hung on to his interest like grim death.

These groups, joined together under political pressure for the exploitation of the northern Irak oil deposits, decided that they had better make a pact to abstain from bidding against each other for new concessions. The upshot was the "Red Line Agreement," a long and detailed document which has never been published. In oil circles, however, it is well known that its central feature was an undertaking by the signatories that they would not enter separately into any crude-oil production arrangements within the territories of the old Turkish Empire. Also included, it is believed, were restrictions on competition in the sale of Middle Eastern oil.

Iran, by definition, was outside the Red Line territory, while Kuwait, the small British protectorate at the head of the Persian Gulf where Anglo-Iranian shares a rich concession with the Mellon family's Gulf Oil Company, was expressly excluded. Hence the prospective deal between Anglo-Iranian and the New Jersey and Socony companies does not violate the Red Line Agreement. But the case of the Saudi Arabian concession is very different. That is definitely within the Red Line area, and, in fact, the Irak Petroleum Company, acting as agent for its shareholders did attempt to secure it from King Ibn Saud. However, while it was cumbrously consulting its members, Standard of California and Texas nipped in and obtained the prize.

It has proved a prize indeed. Annual output from the handful of wells drilled has reached 27,000,000 barrels. Proved reserves total six billion barrels; probable reserves are immensely larger. And now Standard of New Jersey and Socony have cut themselves in on this wealth, leaving their fellow-signatories of the Red Line Agreement out in the cold. It is understood that the American companies take the view that the agreement lapsed when France was occupied by the Germans and became technically an enemy. The French government, on learning of this argument, which seems morally dubious even if it is legally sound, protested through its ambassadors in London and Washington. The Compagnie des Pétroles is reported to be starting a lawsuit in London with a view to establishing the currency of the Red Line Agreement. Probably it will be joined in this endeavor by Mr. Gulbenkian. Royal Dutch-Shell has not been heard from, but its interests would also appear to have been damaged by an arrangement which adds enormously to the crude supplies available to its chief rivals in the petroleum-distribution business. Anglo-Iranian, on the other hand, supports the American position; as we have seen, it will be compensated by a twenty-year purchase contract for its own output.

It badly needs such an arrangement, for Anglo-Iranian has never built up a really large sales organization of its own, and having more than doubled production in Iran during the war, it must now find additional outlets. Moreover, it is beginning to obtain an increasing flow of oil from the Kuwait field.

In the years before the war the effect of the Red Line Agreement was to slow up Middle Eastern oil development. Indeed, that may have been one of its purposes, for the big international oil concerns were all anxious lest too rapid an increase in supply should endanger a profitable price structure. But since the war's end, demand both in the United States and abroad has proved well beyond expert estimates, and barring a worldwide depression, increased Middle Eastern production should find an eager market. In any case a policy of checking development is no longer very feasible. The appetites of the Arab potentates have been whetted by news of the rapidly expanding royalty income of King Ibn Saud. They are urging concessionaires to get on with production and hinting that delay might induce them to deal with other oil-thirsty parties—Soviet Russia, for instance.

One group, alarmed by Middle Eastern developments and resentful of the encouragement given to them by the American government, consists of the independent producers of this country. They do not fear the entry of Arabian or Iranian oil into the United States, but they see it filling European needs and so depriving Venezuela and other lands bordering the Caribbean of one of their chief markets. The result, they suspect, will be to divert increasing amounts of Caribbean oil to American consumers and so intensify domestic competition. Undoubtedly the Navy and Interior departments hope that just this will occur. Although spokesmen for the independents insist that talk of declining American reserves is "propaganda," government experts feel that it is necessary to conserve domestic resources for both economic and strategic reasons. It is this difference which underlies the controversy over the Anglo-American Oil Agreement. The independents, charging that the agreement will facilitate both more government regulation and more foreign competition, have lobbied hard against its ratification by the Senate. The success they have scored appears to have been vain. The private treaties which have been discussed in this article seem likely to achieve many of the objectives of the Anglo-American Oil Agreement, and they do not require the approval of the Senate.

Internationally, the consequences of the new Middle Eastern deals may well prove far-reaching. It is useless for the Foreign Office to assert that the agreement between Anglo-Iranian and the American companies is "purely commercial," or for the State Department to pretend that it has merely been "kept informed" about either this or the Arabian-American contract. It is all too obvious that deals of this nature impinge on high policy and equally obvious that the oil companies would not dare to go ahead with them unless sure of govern-

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ment support. And, it must not be forgotten, Anglo-Iranian is controlled by the British government.

The fact is that the United States has now been placed right in the center of the Middle Eastern picture, with the cheerful acquiescence of the British government. This is not likely to alleviate the suspicions of the Soviets, and it will almost certainly spur their efforts to nail down the Azerbaijan concession. The French, as we have noticed, are furious. They see the new deals as part of a sustained effort by the Anglo-Saxon powers to squeeze them out of the Middle East. Moreover, they need more oil that does not have to be paid for in scarce dollars.

There is also the question of Palestine. The enlarged American stake in the Middle East does not necessarily mean greater appeasement of the Arab rulers; they may make threats but they do not want to risk the loss of the wealth which increased oil production promises them. But with three more pipe lines planned to reach the Levantine coast—the existing line from Irak to Haifa and Tripoli is now being duplicated—the strategic and economic importance of Palestine for both Britain and America is greatly enhanced. It would be naive to suppose that the protection of that interest will not prove a major consideration in any program for the solution of the Palestine problem.

IN ONE EAR

BY LOU FRANKEL

ONE of the strong points of radio has been its ability to bring the listener to the ringside of everything from a political convention to D-Day. But with few exceptions the so-called "actuality" programs produced by radio have been flops. Among the exceptions were the front-line war shows and Norman Corwin's British-produced "People to People" series.

So when CBS late in 1946 announced "Cross-Section—U. S. A." in which teams of reporter-interviewers were to bring individuals from various social and economic levels to the microphone to discuss prices and wages, some of us anticipated a dull program. Instead, on Saturday, January 4, at three o'clock E.S.T., we heard one of the best actualities ever broadcast.

Last year CBS did three similar series called cross-sections of the A. F. of L., N. A. M., and C. I. O. This year's expanded program is made possible through the cooperation of the United States Chamber of Commerce, the New Council of American Business, the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, the National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, and the National Farmers' Union.

On the table for the first performance was "the cause and cure of runaway prices." Normally this would have given dull opinions mouthed by people with no ability to project them interestingly. The very different type of show that was put on is what makes "Cross-Section—U. S. A." so important. It had the polish of a studio re-creation, it had pace and contrast, and it had a punch finish—all most unusual qualities in out-of-studio productions, especially when the scene is switched from one place to another.

To get what it wanted, CBS decided that five groups—farmers, production-line and white-collar workers, large and small business men—should be represented, and it sent its reporter-interviewer teams out to find the people. On a farm outside Kansas City they talked with a member of the Grange and his wife; in a kitchen in Detroit, with an automobile worker and his wife. A manufacturer spoke from his plant in Los Angeles and was answered by a member of the New Council of American Business from his wholesale and retail shoe-repair shop in Washington. A Chicago teacher belonging to the American Federation of Teachers spoke from a bowling alley where he works nights. Naturally each participant had a different slant on why prices were zooming and what might be done about it. And that diversity of approach and opinion is what "Cross-Section—U. S. A." hopes to get across to the listener.

Everyone worked from a skeleton script, flexible enough to allow for asides and interruptions. The interviewers adeptly limited themselves to keeping the show moving. Each speaker saved his strongest fact for the end, thus giving the next speaker a logical point to enter the program. There was none of the usual, "And now we switch to John Doakes in Chicago for his views on this subject." The Detroit union man tackled the last thing the farmer said, was in turned tackled by the manufacturer, and so on. After the audience had the feel of the new participant—perhaps thirty seconds of talk did it—the interviewer came in and made the identifications.

It took a lot of preparation and cost a potful of money, for full remote equipment was sent out for each job. By this means the background noises were held down to recognition without intruding: in the Detroit kitchen, for example, when a youngster started to cry, the sound came through effectively without fouling up the show.

It was the little individual touches that made this broadcast the whopping success it was. The farmer told how much he had to pay for overalls and a reaper, compared with a few years ago; the autoworker's wife said that they now eat macaroni instead of meat and the kids get three instead of five quarts of milk a week; the shoe-repair man rapped the meat packers for holding back cattle—and keeping him from getting leather—until they killed the OPA, and then boosting prices; the Chicago science teacher complained that the white-collar worker was caught between the big unions and big business.

In addition, the show had Ed Murrow to give it financial and man-power support, Dwight Cooke as narrator and associate producer, and Bill Downs to put good crews in the field.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

From the Kingdom of Necessity

LORD WEARY'S CASTLE. By Robert Lowell. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

MANY of the reviews of "Lord Weary's Castle" have been conscious that it is an event of the order of Auden's first book; I know no poetry since Auden's that is better than Robert Lowell's. Everybody who reads poetry will read it sooner or later. I hope that I can help readers by pointing out its distinguishing features, by tracing its development, and by analyzing the themes that unify it.

Underneath all these poems "there is one story and one story only": when this essential theme or subject is understood, the unity of attitudes and judgments underlying the variety of the poems becomes startlingly explicit. The poems understand the world as a sort of conflict of opposites. In this struggle one opposite is that cake of custom in which all of us lie imbedded like lungfish—the stasis or inertia of the complacent self, the satisfied persistence in evil that is damnation. In this realm of necessity the poems place everything that is closed, turned inward, incestuous, that blinds or binds: the Old Law, imperialism, militarism, capitalism, Calvinism, Authority, the Father, the rich who will "do everything for the poor except get off their backs." But struggling within this like leaven, falling to it like light, is everything that is free or open, that grows or is willing to change: here is the generosity or willingness or openness that is itself salvation; here is "accessibility to experience"; this is the realm of freedom, of the Grace that has replaced the Law, of the perfect liberator whom the poet calls Christ.

Consequently the poems can have two possible movements or organizations: they can move from what is closed to what is open, or from what is open to what is closed. The second of these organizations—which corresponds to an "unhappy ending"—is less common, though there are many good examples of it: The Exile's Return, with its menacing *Voi ch'entrate* that transforms the exile's old home into a place where even hope must be abandoned; that extraordinary treatment of the "Oedipus complex," Between the Porch and the Altar, with its four parts each ending in constriction and frustration, its hero who cannot get free of his mother, her punishments, and her world even by dying, but who sees both life and death in terms of her, and thinks at the end that, sword in hand, the Lord "watches me for Mother, and will turn/The bier and baby-carriage where I burn."

But normally the poems move into liberation—even death is seen as liberation, a widening into darkness: that old closed system, Grandfather Arthur Winslow, dying of cancer in his adjusted bed, at the last is the child Arthur whom the swanboats once rode through the Public Garden, whom now "the ghost of risen Jesus walks the waves to run/Upon a trumpeting black swan/Beyond Charles River to the Acheron/Where the wide waters and their voyager are one." (Compare the endings of The Drunken Fisherman and Dea Roma.) The Death of the Sheriff moves from closure—the "ordered darkness" of the homicidal sheriff, the "loved sightless smother" of the incestuous lovers, the "unsearchable quicksilver heart/Where spiders stare their eyes out at their own/Spitting and knotted likeness"—up into the open sky, to those "light wanderers" the planets, to the "thirsty Dipper on the arc of night." Just so the cold, blundering, iron confusion of Christmas Eve Under Hooker's Statue ends in flowers, the wild fields, a Christ "once again turned wanderer and child." In Rebellion the son seals "an everlasting pact/With Dives to *contract*/The world that *spreads* in pain"; but at last he rebels against his father and his father's New England commercial theocracy, and "the world *spread*/When the clubbed flintlock broke my father's brain." The italicized words ought to demonstrate how explicitly, at times, these poems formulate the world in the exact terms that I have used.

Where the Rainbow Ends describes in apocalyptic terms the wintry, Calvinist, capitalist—Lowell has Weber's attitude about the connection of capitalism and Calvinism—dead end of God's covenant with man, a frozen Boston where even the cold-blooded serpents "whistle at the cold." (Lowell often uses cold as a plain and physically correct symbol for what is constricted, static, turned in upon itself.) There "the scythers, Time and Death,/Helmed locusts, move upon the tree of breath," of the spirit of man; a bridge curves over Charles River like an ironic parody of the rainbow's covenant; both "the wild ingrafted olive and its root/Are withered" (these are Paul's terms for the Judaism of the Old Law and the Gentile Christianity grafted upon it); "every dove [the Holy Ghost, the bringer of the olive leaf to the Ark] is sold" for a commercialized, legalized sacrifice. The whole system seems an abstract, rationalized "graph of Revelations," of the last accusation and judgment brought against man now that "the Chapel's sharp-shinned eagle shifts its hold/On serpent-Time, the rainbow's epitaph." This last line means exactly what the last line in The Quaker Graveyard—"The Lord survives the rainbow of his will"—means; both are inexpressibly menacing, since they show the covenant as something that binds only us, as something abrogated merely by the passage of time, as a closed system opening not into liberation but into infinite and overwhelming possibility; they have something of the terror, but none of the pity, of Blake's "Time is the mercy of Eternity."

The worshiper climbs to the altar of the terrible I AM like a victim, to breathe the rarefied and intolerable aether of his union with the divinity of the Apocalypse; he despairs even of the wings that beat against his cheek: "What can the dove of Jesus give/You now but wisdom, exile?" When the poem has reached this point of the most extreme closure, when the infinite grace that atones and liberates is seen as no more than the bitter and useless wisdom of the exile, it opens with a rush of acceptant joy into: "Stand and live,/The

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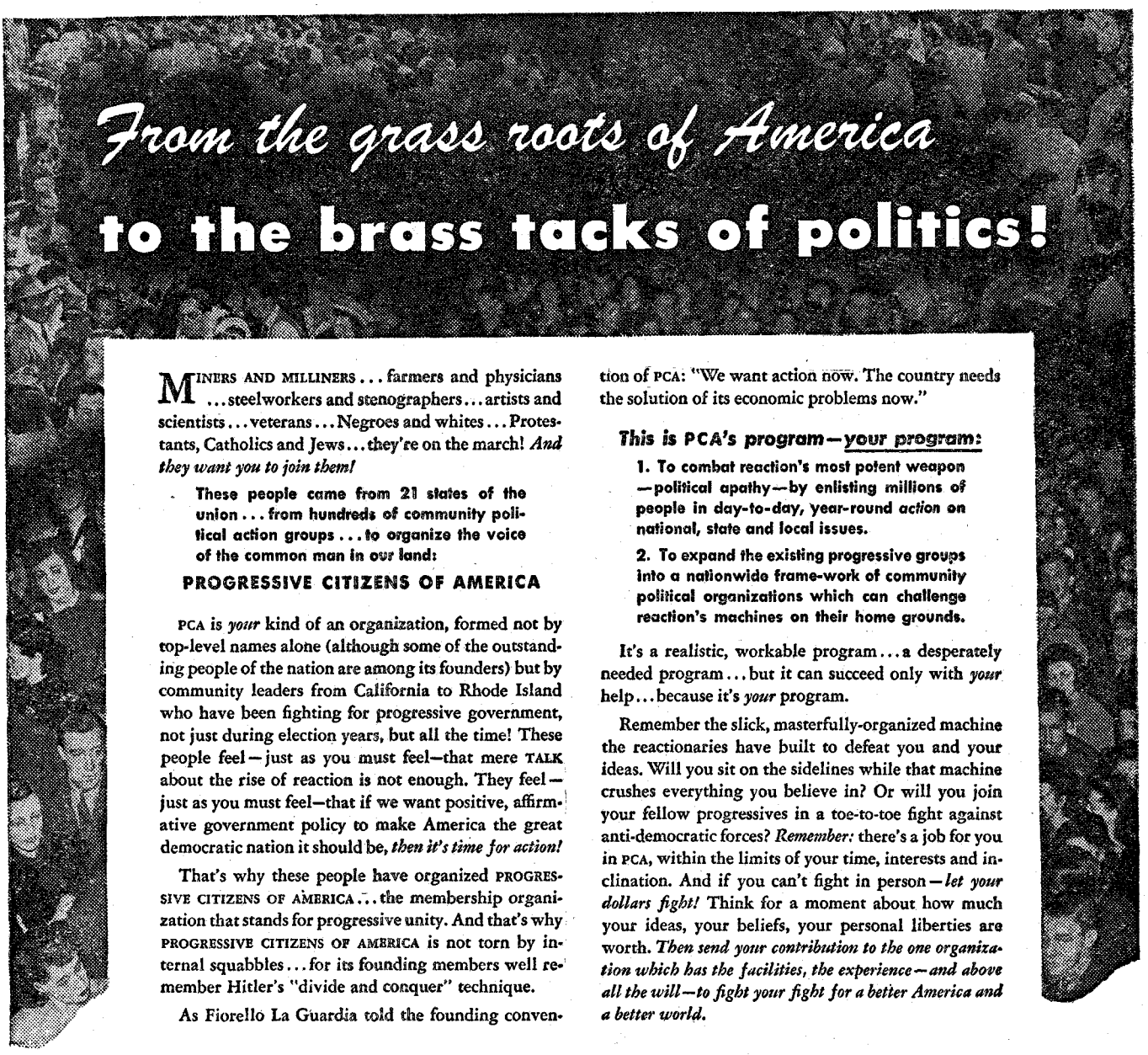

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dove has brought an olive branch to eat." The dove of Jesus brings to the worshiper the olive branch that shows him that the flood has receded, opening the whole earth for him; the olive branch of peace and reconciliation; the olive branch that he is "to eat" as a symbol of the eaten flesh and blood of Christ, of atonement, identification, and liberation. Both the old covenant and the new still hold, nothing has changed: here as they were and will be, are life and salvation.

Lowell seems a strange opposite of the usual Catholic convert, who distrusts freedom as much as he needs bondage, and who sees the world as a liberal chaos which can be ordered and redeemed only by that rigid and final Authority to which men submit without question. Lowell reminds one more of those heretical enthusiasts, often disciplined and occasionally sanctified or excommunicated, who are more at home in the Church Triumphant than in the church of this world, which is one more state; a phrase like Lowell's "St. Peter, the distorted key" is likely to be appreciated outside the church and overlooked inside it, *ad maiorem gloriam* of Catholic poetry. In Lowell's poems the Son is pure liberation from the incestuous, complacent, inveterate evil of established society, of which the Law is a part—although the Father, Jehovah, has retained both the violence necessary to break up this inertia and a good deal of the menacing sternness of Authority as such. (It is interesting to compare the figure of the Uncle in early Auden, who sanctifies rebellion by his authority; the authority of Lowell's Christ is sanctified by his rebellion or liberation.)

Anyone who compares Lowell's earlier and later poems will see this movement from constriction to liberation as his work's ruling principle of growth. The grim, violent, sordid constriction of his earliest poems—most of them omitted from this book—seems to be temperamental, the Old Adam which the poet grew from and partially transcends; and a good deal of what was excessive in the wonderful rhetorical machine of a poem like The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket, which catches and twists to pieces the helplessly enjoying reader, is gone from his latest poems, or else dramatically justified and no longer excessive. The Quaker Graveyard is a baroque work, like "Paradise Lost"; but the coiling violence of the rhetoric, the harshly stubborn intensity that accompanies its verbs and verbals, the clustering stresses learned from accentual verse, come from a man contracting every muscle, grinding his teeth together till his shut eyes ache. Lowell's later work has moved in the direction of the poem's quiet contrast-section, Walsingham; the denunciatory prophetic tone has disappeared, along with the early satiric effects that were one of the poet's weaknesses. The later poems depend less on rhetorical description than on dramatic speech; their wholes have escaped from the hypnotic bondage of the details. Often the elaborate rhetorical stanzas have changed into a novel sort of dramatic or narrative couplet, run-on but with heavily stressed rhymes. A girl's nightmare, in the late Katherine's Dream, is far more open, classical, and speech-like than the poet's own descriptive meditation in an earlier work like Christmas at Black Rock. It is important to understand this development; the reviews I have read have not realized that it exists.

Lowell has a completely unscientific, but thoroughly historical mind. (It is literary and traditional as well: he uses the past so effectively because he thinks so much as it did.) Lowell's present contains the past—especially Rome, the late Middle Ages, and New England—as an operative skeleton just under the skin. This is rare among contemporary poets, who look at the past as Blücher looked at London: "What a city to sack!" (Actually he said, "What a mix-up!" But this fits, too.) War, Trade, and Jehovah march side by side through these centuries: it is the fundamental likeness of the past and present, and not their disparity, which is brought out. "Cold/Snaps the bronze toes and fingers of the Christ/My father fetched from Florence, and the dead/Chatters to nothing in the thankless ground/His father screwed from Charlie Stark and sold/To the selectmen." This is the history of New England's nineteenth century in a sentence. Lowell's period pieces, which range from Propertius to Jonathan Edwards, are notable partly for their details—which are sometimes as magically and professionally illusionary as those of "I, Claudius"—but mainly for the empathy, the historical identification, that underlie the details. These period pieces are intimately related to Lowell's adaptations of poems from other languages; both are valuable as ways of getting a varied, extensive, and alien experience into his work. Dismissing these adaptations as "translations" is like dismissing To Celia or Cathay, and betrays an odd dislike or ignorance of an important and traditional procedure of poets.

Lowell is an extremely professional poet, and the degree of intensity of his poems is equaled by their degree of organization. Inside its elaborate stanzas the poem is put together like a mosaic: the shifts of movement, the varied pauses, the alternation in the length of sentences, the counterpoint between lines and sentences, are the outer form of a subject matter that has been given a dramatic, dialectical internal organization; and it is hard to exaggerate the strength and life, the constant richness and surprise of metaphor and sound and motion, of the language itself. The organization of Lowell's poems resembles that of traditional English poetry—especially when compared to that type of semi-imagist modern organization in which the things of the poem seem to marshal themselves like Dryden's atoms—but often this is complicated by stream-of-consciousness, dream, or dramatic-monologue types of structure. This makes the poems more difficult, but it is worth the price—a great many of the most valuable dramatic effects cannot be attained inside a more logical or abstract organization. Lowell's poetry is a unique fusion of modernist and traditional poetry, and there exist conjoined in it certain effects that one would hitherto have thought mutually exclusive; however, it is essentially a post- or anti-modernist poetry, and as such is certain to be influential.

Stop Lowell is wonderfully good at discovering powerful, homely, grotesque, but exactly appropriate particulars for his poems. "Actuality is something brute," said Peirce. "There is no reason in it. I instance putting your shoulder against a door and trying to force it open against an unseen, silent, and unknown resistance." The things in Lowell's poems have, necessarily, been wrenched into formal shape, organized under terrific pressure, but they keep to an extraordinary degree their stubborn, unmoved toughness, their senseless originality and contingency: no poet is more notable for

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what, I have read, Duns Scotus calls *haeccitas*—the contrary, persisting, and singular thinginess of every being in the world; but this detailed factuality is particularly effective because it sets off, or is set off by, the elevation and rhetorical sweep characteristic of much of the best poetry of the past. Lowell is obviously a haptic rather than a visual type: a poem like Colloquy in Black Rock has some of the most extraordinary kinesthetic effects in English, perfect duplications of what is being described. It is impossible not to notice the weight and power of his lines—most others look a little threadbare or transparent beside them. Because of passages like

> In the great ash-pit of Jehoshaphat
> The bones cry for the blood of the white whale,
> The fat flukes arch and whack about its ears,
> The death-lance churns into the sanctuary, tears
> The gun-blue swingle, heaving like a flail,
> And hacks the coiling life out . . .

the smooth, calm, and flowing ease of some passages, the flat ease of the ordinary speech of others, have more than their usual effectiveness: the dead mistress of Propertius, a black nail dangling from a finger, Lethe oozing from her nether lip, in the end can murmur to the "apple-sweetened Anio":

> . . . Anio, you will please
> Me if you whisper upon sliding knees:
> "Propertius, Cynthia is here:
> She shakes her blossoms when my waters clear."

The poems' wit is often the wit of things: the "poised relations sipping sherry/And tracking up the carpet," the "postgirl sounding her French horn" over the snows of Maine, the "stern Colonial magistrates and wards/of Charles the Second." The "corn-fed mouse/Reined in his bestial passions"; the "red-flanneled madmen looked through bars." One laughs out in church.

Lowell, at his best and latest, is a dramatic poet: he presents people, actions, speeches, things as they feel and look to people; the poet's generalizations are usually implied, and the poem's explicit generalizations are there primarily because they are dramatically necessary—it is not usually the poet who means them. He does not present themes or generalizations but a world—and the differences and similarities between it and the ordinary one bring home to us themes, generalizations, and the poet himself. There is never any exploitation of the "personality" of the poet; the *I* who stands meditating by Hooker's statue or the Quaker graveyard is closer to the different *I's* of the dramatic monologues than to the man who wrote them. It is partly because of this that atheists are vexed by his Catholic views, and Catholics by his heretical ones, so much less than they normally would be.

But there are other reasons. The poet's rather odd and imaginative Catholicism is thoroughly suitable to his mind, which is so traditional and dramatic that no images from the sciences, next to none from philosophy, occur in his poems. Such a Catholicism is thoroughly suited to literature, since it *is* essentially literary, anthropomorphic, emotional. It is an advantage to the poet to have a frame of reference, terms of generalization, which are themselves human, emotional, and effective as literature. "Bodily Changes in Fear, Rage, and Hunger" may let the poet know more about the anger of Achilles, but it is hard for him to have to talk about adrenalin and the thalamus; and when the arrows of Apollo are transformed into "a lack of adequate sanitary facilities," everything is lost but understanding. (This helps explain the dependence of contemporary poetry on particulars, emotions, things—its generalizations, where they are most effective, are fantastic, though often traditionally so.) Naturally the terms of scientific explanation cannot have these poetic and emotional effects, since it is precisely by the exclusion of such effects that science has developed. Lowell's Catholicism represents effective realities of human behavior and desire, regardless of whether it is true, false, or absurd; and, as everyone must realize, it is possible to tell part of the truth about the world in terms that are false, limited, and fantastic—else how should we have told it? There is admittedly no "correct" or "scientific" view of a great many things that a poet writes about—values, emotions, and so forth—and he has to deal with them in dramatic and particular terms, if he has foregone the advantage of prescientific ideologies like Christianity or Marxism. (Of course it seems to me an advantage that he almost necessarily foregoes; I remember writing about contemporary religious poems, "It is hard to enjoy the ambergris for thinking of all those suffering whales," and most people will feel this when they encounter a passage in Lowell telling them how Bernadette's miraculous vision of Our Lady "puts out reason's eyes." It does indeed.)

It is unusually difficult to say which are the best poems in "Lord Weary's Castle": at least a dozen are realized past changing, triumphs that vary only in scope and intensity—a number of others are poems that almost any living poet would be pleased to have written. But certainly some of the most wonderful things in the book are Where the Rainbow Ends, Between the Porch and the Altar, The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket, Colloquy in Black Rock, The Death of the Sheriff (especially the first of the two poems that compose it), and At the Indian-Killer's Grave. Close to these are The Exile's Return, The Ghost, Charles the Fifth and the Peasant, Death from Cancer, Mr. Edwards and the Spider, Christmas Eve under Hooker's Statue, Mary Winslow—and I cannot leave unmentioned poems like After the Surprising Conversions, The Drunken Fisherman, The Blind Leading the Blind, The Shako, France, and New Year's Day. I do not list a number of small or partial successes that will delight anyone who loves poetry.

When I reviewed Lowell's first book I finished by saying, "Some of the best poems of the next years ought to be written by him." The appearance of "Lord Weary's Castle" makes me feel less like Adams or Leverrier than like a rainmaker who predicts rain, and gets a flood which drowns everyone in the county. A few of these poems, I believe, will be read as long as men remember English.

The Hindemith-Balanchine-Seligman ballet, "The Four Temperaments," will be repeated by the Ballet Society on May 14, not—as was announced by The Nation *last week—on January 14.*

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BRIEFER COMMENT

Growing Up in Salonika

IN MARCH, 1936, upon a morning of crystalline sunlight, as I was walking down a main street in Salonika toward the waterfront, I heard behind me a group of men talking in Spanish. It was not a contemporary Castilian, yet it was a cultured and precise language they were speaking; having read Menéndez Pidal's marvelous work on the Spanish romances preserved by the Jews of the Spanish diaspora, I turned and boldly addressed the group in the language of the country from which I had just arrived. As a result of that somewhat brash confrontation my memory of the four days I spent in Salonika is among the pleasantest memories of my life. "Farewell to Salonika" by Leon Sciaky (A. A. Wyn, $2.75), might almost have been written for my pleasure. As I read it I was often tempted to write to the author and tell him some unimportant fact about his city as it was in 1936; that the White Tower erected by a Venetian architect for a seventeenth-century despot was then in use as Boy Scout headquarters, that the removal of the great triumphal arch was in debate, and so on.

Yet my pleasure cannot have been a purely personal one, for "Farewell to Salonika" is an altogether charming book, so simply and truthfully written that it demands no intimate knowledge of the place and persons presented. It is a record of growing up, a family portrait in which the history of a Jewish family, of Spanish Sephardim, is given its proper social context. The Salonika that one reads about is not only a fascinating and complex city in which many national and cultural strains run side by side, but it is the critical city of Aegean politics. The breakdown of the Turkish Empire and its consequences for Balkan affairs are better understood when one has read this book.

But it is not the political value of the book that should be emphasized so much as its quiet charm, its unpretentious and easy portrayal of a cultural pattern through an account of an engaging family. "Farewell to Salonika" is a warm and softly luminous book. I am grateful for the chance that brought it my way. RALPH BATES

A Summary of the Recent Past

IN "THE FUTURE IN PERSPECTIVE" (Putnam's, $4), Sigmund Neumann provides a concise recapitulation of how we traveled to the present moment in history from the beginning of World War I. Describing the era as the Second Thirty Years' War, Mr. Neumann writes in the sober manner of a Dutch uncle explaining things "To a Friend in Need of an Answer." Those who have made it their business to keep informed on current affairs and their background will probably find nothing newly enlightening in the book, and its scope is too modest to make it useful as a reference, but as an introduction to the study of our times and the peace it must devise "The Future in Perspective" is sound and solid, altogether commendable.

Most of the text is concerned with the interplay of the national forces of Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States; the affairs of other European states are sketched in more briefly, while the Far East does not come into the picture until 1931. Mr. Neumann gives social and economic matters adequate attention. The book abounds in lively characterizations of the leading statesmen and politicos of the time.

Mr. Neumann interprets the Second Thirty Years' War in terms of "three aspects—international, national, and personal." Now, at the war's end, if it is the end, nationalism "is on trial as the organizing principle of world order." Admitting at the close of the volume the difficulties of Big Three collaboration in making peace, Mr. Neumann, who began on a higher note of optimism in this connection, admits that "the list of missed opportunities is appalling and the agenda of unsolved matters still growing. We have come dangerously close to losing the fruits of victory altogether." But he assures his friend that "an international development beyond the existing competition of the powers seems to be assured." Democracy, he points out, must "succeed in re-integrating the amorphous millions." The book is written in the faith that "neither anarchic nor totalitarian existence is the design of our age." W. J. GOLD

A Lower-Case Santa Claus

THIS MORALITY in five scenes—"Santa Claus," by E. E. Cummings (Holt, $1.50)—contains some moving passages but seems on the whole one of the author's less happy efforts. Perhaps the tradition of the morality play requires a certain grimness: the devil in red, or death in black or a skeleton rig, making with antics, and the sermon coming down like a club on the heads of the audience; perhaps this particular morality would play better than it reads. The gospel of love, the good Lord knows, is a fine thing to preach, but here Mr. Cummings, it seems to me, is at once too simple and too ecclesiastical, lacking the lyrical lift and lilt which made his "1x1," for instance, a much more joyous invitation to become converted. ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Modern Migrations

DURING THE TIME of the religious wars in feudal Europe the prevailing rule was, *Cuius regio, eius religio*—in whose region I live, his religion I profess. After the birth of the nation-states such ideological adjustments became less frequent. When in World War I the three multi-national states of Europe—the Russian, the Ottoman, and the Austrian empire—collapsed, quite a number of new national states with national minorities rose from their ashes. Special minority treaties attempted to protect the rights of these minority groups with more or less success. The victors of World War II, realizing the failure of these treaties, agreed to get rid of the troublesome minority groups by voluntary or compulsory resettlement. The Convention of Lausanne of 1923, exchanging Graeco-Turkish minorities, had set a precedent for the German-Italian agreement of 1939, and thus inaugurated the vast transfer program of the Third Reich. In "European Population Transfers, 1939-1945" (Oxford, $5) Joseph Schechtman proves that two transfers "to which no blitz tempo was applied," namely, the Tyrolean and the Graeco-

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Bulgarian exchanges, "failed to achieve their objective of eliminating the minority groups." After a conscientious examination of the German resettlement program and of the transfer of German and non-German minorities, the author concludes that populations should not be transferred until all other agencies have been explored. If the transfer becomes an inescapable last resort, then it should be an all-inclusive measure, since its objective is not to remove a minority group but to remove a minority problem. It is a pity that this well-documented, scholarly study was not available at the time of the Potsdam declaration. Perhaps the framers of the peace treaties will read it and do their best to eliminate the clash of national emotions in order to avoid the cruelties of population transfers.

RUSTEM VAMBERY

Ave Atque Vale

TO AVOID THE SNARES of metaphysics in the face of approaching death is the supreme test for the atheist, the hedonist, the scientific philosopher, or the writer whose search for truth has led him into the jungle of empirical fact. At some crucial point in his existence, when death quite suddenly becomes an inevitable and personal event, there is apt to be a retreat, more or less dignified, from the defiant frontier reached by the bold and more youthful mind: Aldous Huxley abandons his brave new world for the timeless truths of the neo-Buddhists; Somerset Maugham in his premature valedictory pays graceful lip-service to the Great Unknown; and only a courageous few, like Lord Chesterfield, bow themselves out to the same tune to which they danced in youth.

It is to the eternal credit of H. G. Wells, who spent most of his highly profitable seventy-nine years in a ceaseless pursuit of truth and a relentless attack on human stupidity, bigotry, and bogus morality, that his final conclusions on the nature of life as expressed in "Mind at the End of Its Tether" (Didier, $2.50) yield not an inch to the terrors of the grave. Though he wrote the book after his doctor had informed him of his imminent death, he died with the full courage of his conviction that there is no particular *reason* for life, that the general prognosis for the future history of man is discouraging, and that the reign of Homo sapiens on this planet is probably nearly over unless he pulls himself up sharply by his own boot-straps.

How much more stimulating to be told to face the facts and to be given to understand that the ultimate responsibility is a personal one than to listen to Mr. O'Neill's lengthy sermon to the effect that to retire into an ivory tower and lock the door is one solution, or to read Gerald Heard's "Pain, Sex, and Time," based on the same initial premises of the breakdown of evolution and the atrophy of Homo sapiens, and then be offered the sop of westernized Yoga. Mr. Wells extends no comfort and quibbles not at all; he simply states that he has lived cheerfully and abundantly and enjoyed it, and that, despite all the evidence to the contrary, it is in his nature to believe that man will struggle on to accompany the planet to its end. Such conclusions demand real courage, and it enhances Mr. Wells's reputation and the value of his previous work that his final testament is so uncompromising.

The book also contains a short fantasy, The Happy Turning, described by the author as "a dream of life." It is a sharp little satire in which Wells attacks the divines, the politicians, the B. B. C., and everything else he can lay his hands on. It is extremely witty and leaves one with an acute sense of loss that H. G. Wells will write no more.

ANTHONY BOWER

Dos Passos and the War

WHETHER HE IS WRITING about the adventures of Roger Williams in Winthrop's Boston and Cromwell's England, as in his strangely neglected "The Ground We Stand On;" or about his own adventures in World War I and the fantastic between-wars world, John Dos Passos has a way of getting at the roots of the matter which makes his reporting, historical or contemporary, a creative art. Myopic as an owl, Dos can nevertheless spot those flying fragments, overlooked by the run of his fellows, which will build up into a memorable whole under his sensitive artistry.

He had come back from covering the domestic war scene in "The State of the Nation" and was digging around in the library doing research for a book on Jefferson when he took an assignment from *Life* as a correspondent, starting for the Pacific islands in December, 1944. What he saw and heard and felt in the last days of the war and the start of the international crack-up called the peace he has put down stirringly in "Tour of Duty" (Houghton Mifflin, $3).

It may be that, like this reviewer, you don't want to learn about war any more. Just the same you should go along with Dos Passos, hearing big guns and little fired in anger, talking to G. I.'s and officers, "strangers and afraid in a world they never made," getting down the authentic speech of admirals and ensigns and gobs and seabees and the typewriting men of the "chair-borne divisions," and you will like the going, rough as it often is.

There will be many, though, who won't like this book. Some of the stuffed shirts in the AMG, for example, and all the Communists who have long had Dos on the *index expurgatorius* and will put him further into the Thirteenth Street doghouse after reading what he has to say about the Russians in the occupied areas. Now I hope Dos Passos can get back to Jefferson. Jefferson is a pretty good man to get back to these days, and John Dos Passos is the man to bring the Virginian, with his "passion for peace," alive in our times.

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Drama

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

GEORGE KELLY'S "The Fatal Weakness" has now been running at the Royale Theater for some time. It is not, I believe, one of the outstanding hits, but Mr. Kelly is too interesting and too original a playwright not to deserve notice even at this late date. Moreover, the play gives Miss Ina Claire an opportunity to demonstrate that she is still quite the most accomplished comedienne on our stage.

Mr. Kelly had his great and apparently easy success a generation ago. Then, by what seemed like deliberate intention, he changed his whole manner, and after a series of failures stopped writing entirely until "The Deep Mrs. Sykes" had a success of esteem some eighteen months ago. The new play is lighter in tone than the last-mentioned piece, but it is obviously the product of the same unusual kind of interest in the same unusual kind of character problem, and in both cases too large a part of every audience seemed to find itself in a state of minor bafflement. Either, it seemed to feel, it did not quite know what Mr. Kelly was driving at or, if it did, it failed to share his interest in the subject under examination.

Any attempt to state even the main features of the story is bound to create a false impression. If I say, for instance, that it is about a middle-aged woman who rather sadly agrees to divorce her husband when she learns that he is in love with someone else—that will sound like a very commonplace domestic drama. If, on the other hand, I should choose to explain that the story deals with an attractive but infantile sentimentalist so devoted to weddings that she insists upon dressing very much like a bride to attend the marriage of her former husband—that will certainly suggest a rather eccentric farce. In actual fact, however, "The Fatal Weakness" is neither commonplace domestic drama nor eccentric farce, but a character comedy whose charm as well as whose somewhat baffling quality depends upon the fact that it is a shrewd, cool analysis of a rather unusual woman looked at from an even more unusual point of view. All the incidentals of the play, including the whole background of upper middle-class manners, are sharply sketched in, and the ready laughter of the audience is evidence enough that these incidentals are recognized and appreciated. In their case the method and the style are familiar. The spectator knows where he is and thinks that he knows what to expect. But neither the action nor the author's commentary ever falls into any of the familiar grooves one is perpetually expecting it to find. Mr. Kelly rejects all the ready-made patterns which would immediately render his play comfortably classifiable and thus defeats all the easy expectations.

"I don't even know," so I heard one spectator complain, "whether this woman is supposed to be intelligent or a fool, sympathetic or unsympathetic. I don't even know whether the author likes her or not." And the doubt, so it seems to me, was not because Mr. Kelly did not answer all those questions as clearly as they need be or could be answered, but because he was observing his queer specimen as freshly as he could and refusing to attribute to her any of the traits which have come, by tradition, to serve as labels easily translated to mean "I approve" or "I disapprove." Here, he says, is a woman well meaning and, in many ways, charming. But her emotions are not very real, certainly not very grown up. To her husband she has never been able to give anything except the romantic emotionalism of an adolescent. She thinks that she loves him, and she can prove it by weeping over his loss. But she weeps almost as much at the weddings of people she doesn't even know, and her emotion goes hardly deeper in the one case than in the other. Some women make bad wives, not because they are wicked or hateful, but simply because they never get beyond sentiment, and though that is something for which moral condemnation is too severe, it is also something from which there is no redemption, however freely forgiveness may be granted. This particular woman will lose her husband, and it will make her genuinely sad to know that she has lost him. But the weight of none of her emotions will ever be more than she can easily bear.

Is this a subject too slight or too elusive for a play? Many would say so. It is, they would argue, rather a subject for a novel or a novelette, for a kind of tenuous analysis somewhat in the manner of Henry James, or at least in that of one of his less weighty followers. But I know of no solid reason why this should be so, for Mr. Kelly, it seems to me, actually makes his point as clearly and as interestingly as it could be made, and he disappoints only the conventional expectation that a play shall have a somewhat sharper impact and depend upon bolder strokes. What he has given us is not precisely what I usually expect in the theater, but I was, nevertheless, very well satisfied to find it there. And if Mr. Kelly scorns to sacrifice everything else to the theatrically effective scene, it is certainly not because he cannot write such scenes when he wants to do so, as he beautifully demonstrates in his second act, when he works out the most ingenious variation of the standard "dinner is served" curtain which it has been my pleasure as a professional to see in a long, long time.

In general Mr. Kelly's women tend to be far better than his men; the two male characters who appear in this play are mere sticks, but Jennifer Howard, the young daughter of Clare Eames and Sidney Howard, gives a beautiful performance in the role of the heroine's daughter, and Miss Claire actually interprets and enriches her part as few actresses ever succeed in doing. Time and time again a gesture, an intonation, or merely a fleeting expression points up or explains a line which might otherwise fail of its intention; her intelligence as well as her competence must have been a joy to Mr. Kelly, who acted as his own director.

CONTRIBUTORS

RALPH BATES is the author of "The Fields of Paradise," "The Olive Field," and other novels.

W. J. GOLD was formerly managing editor of the *Virginia Quarterly.*

ANTHONY BOWER was formerly film critic for *The Nation.*

McALISTER COLEMAN, a left-wing journalist, is the author of "Men and Coal."

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Records

B. H. HAGGIN

UNTIL NOW foreign recordings have been discussed in this column only when they have been issued in American pressings. The foreign pressings imported by a few shops have not been discussed because I would either have had to listen to them on the inadequate phonographs in the shops or —if I had been allowed to borrow them to play on my own phonograph—spend an impossible amount of time and energy carrying them back and forth, and this for the benefit of the small number of readers who were interested in them and willing to pay for them at the rate of $2.50 a 12-inch record.

But now Decca is giving imported pressings of the new London Decca recordings—which cost $20 a record—the same distribution as its own records and is sending out copies for review.

Among the first releases are Stravinsky's "Petrushka"—the entire work, not just the usual suite of excerpts—performed by Ansermet with the London Philharmonic (Set ED 2—EDA 2 for automatic machines; $11), Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony, performed by Unger with the National Symphony (Set ED 1; $9), and Beethoven's Overture "Leonore" No. 2, performed by van Beinum with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra (Set ED 4; $5). Ansermet conducted the first performances of "Petrushka" here for the Diaghilev company in 1916, and the performance on the records is superb, with much of the power of Stravinsky's recorded performance of the suite, and none of the nervous tension and excitement of Stokowski's recorded performance of the entire work. On the other hand, those who know Mendelssohn's lovely symphony through Koussevitsky's and Toscanini's winged performances will not enjoy Unger's slow and ponderous progress through it; nor will anyone who has heard the "Leonore" No. 2 played by Toscanini be content with what van Beinum makes of it.

The "full frequency range recordings" of these performances and the expensive London Gramophone machines you may have seen advertised are designed for each other; and the combination of recording and machine produces a sound that is not only beautifully rich and spacious but remarkable in its depth and roundness in space (since so much is made of the extended frequency range—to 14,000 cycles—of both recording and machine, let me add that the sound has the beauty I have described not when the range is out to maximum but when it is considerably reduced by the first step down of the machine's treble control; and that microphone placement is largely responsible for the remarkable depth in space). With the American machines on which I have played them—machines which produce the beautiful sound from the Beecham recording of Mozart's "Linz" Symphony, from the recent Victor recordings of the Chicago Symphony, and from all other good recordings—the sound of the English Deccas is unsatisfactory. It retains the depth in space; but when it is sufficiently bright it is rough or edged, and when not rough or edged it is poorly balanced, dull, and heavy; and the "Petrushka" is hazy with the reverberation of the empty hall.

I should mention that these English Decca records fit on the spindles of American record-changers so loosely as to be not perfectly centered on the turntable, and therefore to produce a wavering in pitch.

The imported Italian C.E.T.R.A. records are available only in small quantity at present, and at the staggering price of $3.25 a record (excise tax included); but I was interested in them because they offered the first complete recordings of Haydn's "Seasons" and Verdi's "Forza del Destino" and a new recording of Mozart's Requiem; and the importer was willing to take the trouble involved in making it possible for me to hear them on a good machine. So I can report that Gui conducts a routine performance of "The Seasons" (10 records), with good singing by Gabriella Gatti, Francesco Albanese, and Luciano Neroni. Also that the first measures of the Overture to "La Forza del Destino" shocked me with the slackness of Marinuzzi's conducting—the slackness of a typical performance of Italian opera that leaves the singers free to indulge in their mannerisms and excesses—the singers in this case being the soprano Maria Caniglia, an excellent baritone whose name I am not sure of, and an inferior tenor named Galiano Massini (18 records). But as against this slackness there was in De Sabata's superb modeling of the sound of Mozart's Requiem a sustained impetus and continuous control that were reminiscent of Toscanini's; and the performance (8 records)—with beautiful singing by Pia Tassinari, Ebe Stignani, Ferrucio Tagliavini, and Italo Tajo, and marvelously recorded—is one of the greatest things ever put on records.

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Letters to the Editors

A Rugged Collectivist

Dear Sirs: There is no doubt that we took a good drubbing in the elections, and no doubt either about the causes of the disaster. The problem is what is to be done.

Petty realism will not avail. What if we had managed to keep the Truman-Tammany-bourbon coalition in power? "Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the rest is in the hands of God." And the Democratic Party is obviously neither wise nor honest. By playing power politics (the Big Three) and party politics we have lost our integrity without even receiving the price. "Shrewd" men are leading us to depression and war; let me remain among the "starry-eyed."

Another note of warning. As I prize freedom of thought above all things, I am an anti-Marxian, and particularly an anti-Communist. But as a liberal I want communism to have the full chance that it would deny us. I want the Communists to be unable to claim that they are driven into tortuous ways because they are deprived of their full constitutional rights. I think it would do us good if we had a Marxian minority of 46 per cent and a Communist minority of 28 per cent, as in France. We have no right to take it for granted that our progressives will always remain middle-of-the-road men, just astraddle of the center line. I rank first of all intellectual liberty, which is very far from assured under our present system; next, security, comfort, dignity for all, which means socialism; third, a legitimate sector for private enterprise, in pioneer, experimental, luxury activities. But that sector, without being purely vestigial, is obviously secondary. The sooner we dare to call ourselves "collectivists" the better it will be for our souls. Our next problem will be how to foster "private enterprise" under collectivism. If collectivism is not linked with party machines, it is not a difficult task. I have lived under collectivism all my life—that is, in institutions not privately owned and not run for profit. And it has never put a brake on my "private enterprise."

Ultimately, problems are not settled by force, and they are not settled by votes. The brilliant victories of the Nazis were vain, and ours are now proving vain in their turn. A village voted that the earth was flat, and the American Congress voted that America should remain isolated. The business of an organ like *The Nation* is not to win votes but to seek the right way.

ALBERT GUERARD

Palo Alto, Cal., December 6

A Step Forward

Dear Sirs: Publication of A Christmas Amnesty, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, in *The Nation* of December 14 was a valuable contribution to the maintenance of American civil liberties. It has been reported in the past few days that the Justice Department may shortly parole hundreds of the objectors still in prison. While this would not mean the full and complete amnesty for all that we seek, it would represent a step forward, and if the government takes it *The Nation* will certainly be entitled to some share in the credit.

I should like to point out, however, that amnesty means not only the release of the men still behind bars but also restoration of civil rights to them and to the thousands of others already freed on parole or completion of sentence.

ALBON MAN

New York, December 18

Vatican Representatives

Dear Sirs: The following letter was sent on November 29 to the Attorney General of the United States:

Recent news dispatches appearing in the New York *Times,* the New York *Herald Tribune,* and newspapers throughout the country have quoted Vatican sources in connection with the recent trial and conviction of Archbishop Stepinac of Yugoslavia as stating that "minor excommunications" have been imposed by the Vatican on all the Roman Catholic civil servants in Yugoslavia who were involved in the trial of the Archbishop and of other members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and priesthood.

These news dispatches quoted the Roman Catholic canon law to the effect that no Roman Catholic who is elected or appointed to civil office in any nation in the world may bring to trial, before a civil court, a Roman Catholic priest or member of the hierarchy charged with violating the laws of the state without obtaining the express permission of the authorities of the Roman Catholic church . . . This means in effect that members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, priests, and even lay Catholics who accept this claim of jurisdiction of the Vatican in relation to their civil duties are to that extent representatives of the Vatican as a foreign power.

If this reasoning be correct, it can mean only one thing: such members of the Roman Catholic church in the United States of America must comply with the provisions of the Foreign Agents' Registration Act.

In view of the basis which the publishing of this canon law gives for a wave of anti-Catholicism in America, it would be a service to our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, as well as compliance with our own federal statute, if you as Attorney General were to begin immediately a grand-jury investigation to discover if the Vatican State's representatives in this country are violating the Foreign Agents' Registration Act.

It is especially important, in the light of worldwide tensions and propagandas which appear deliberately created to bring about another war, that this grand-jury investigation concern itself, among other things, with the extent to which representatives of the Vatican are influencing American foreign policy—either as employees or officials of our Department of State or as propagandists operating to influence the policies and acts of our Department of State.

THE REV. DR. CARLYLE ADAMS,
Editor *Presbyterian Tribune,*
and Six Other Ministers

Brooklyn, December 2

Spoils System in Action

Dear Sirs: I was appointed postmaster at Hatteras, N. C., in 1914. At that time, the office paid less than $400 per annum and no politically influential person wanted the job. Recently, the office has advanced from fourth class to third class, at a salary of $2,200 a year with clerical allowances of $1,400. Not being a political friend of the Con-

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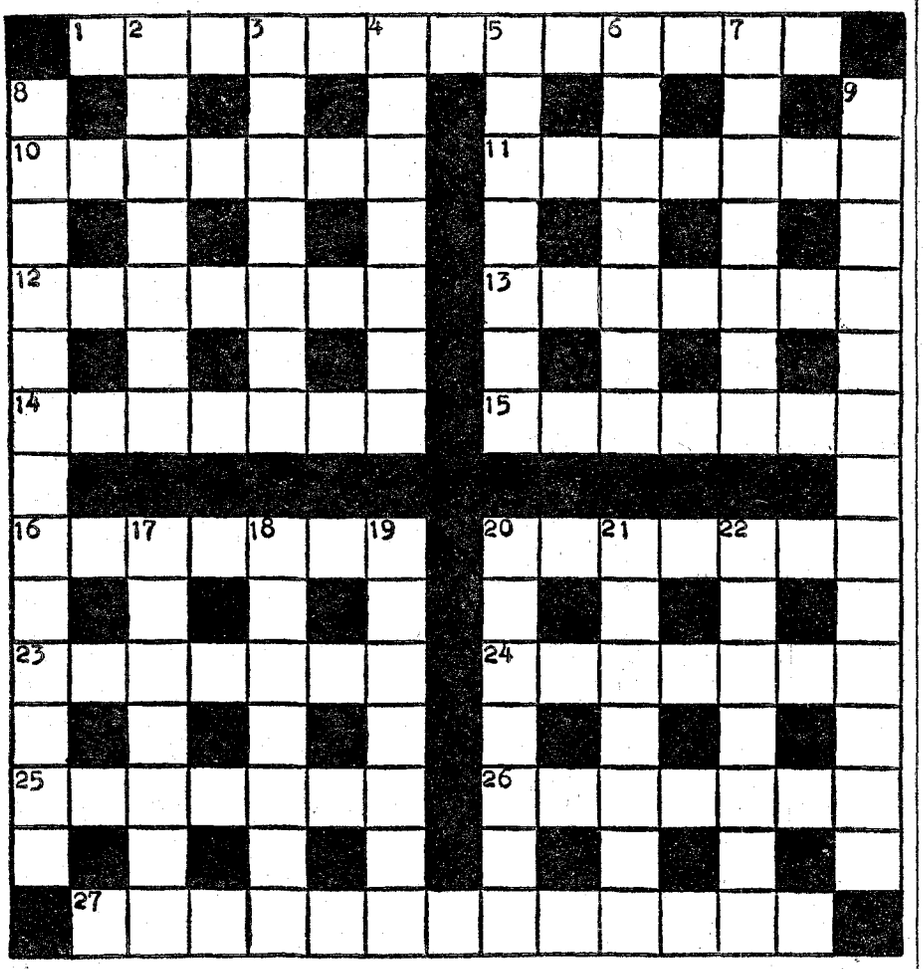
Crossword Puzzle No. 195

By JACK BARRETT



ACROSS

1 What would my French papa smile at as I get on?
10 Far from a sure defense, from the look of it
11 Pair of animals exported by Spain
12 A noble lord starts well ahead of time
13 What the pedant calls his spectacles, perhaps
14 The end we all look forward to
15 Tranquil, isn't it?
16 Welcome to British beggars in one sense, but not in another
20 Capital of the Spanish province of the same name
23 Only one to each foot, not five
24 One nut that can't slip
25 A resume provides a means to an end
26 I darn on (anag.)
27 Heavens above! This is the limit! (7 and 6)

DOWN

2 You wouldn't think having to this a check would make Ned sore
3 Some of these answers are, aren't they?
4 Withdrew
5 1. 1. 1947 (3 and 4)
6 Those who relieve us of our spare cash turn out to be respectable bank clerks
7 Rolf? Sue? It's I!
8 It's mean—and quite right, too (9 and 4)
9 If ever you need something for a rainy day, try this (8 and 5)
17 This churchman is a real pet
18 An expunction in rare use
19 Under suspicion
20 He might have complained of the slings, if not the arrows, of outrageous fortune
21 Low fellow in an operatic song in a rural scene
22 Where the English run their Grand National

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 194

ACROSS:—1 SPARSITY; 5 ESSAYS; 10 LIMBO; 11 MATRIMONY; 12 CAMELOT; 13 CAPITAL; 14 STINGY; 15 OPENERS; 18 HEROINE; 21 CRUSTS; 24 LEMBERG; 26 CHURRED; 27 REDHAIRED; 28 POISE; 29 NIMBLY; 30 ESTRANGE.

DOWN:—1 SELECT; 2 ALMA MATER; 3 SWOLLEN; 4 TIMOTHY; 6 STIPPLE; 7 ABOUT; 8 SPYGLASS; 9 STUCCO; 16 EXTORTION; 17 CHILDREN; 19 ICE-PAIL; 20 EGGERY; 21 CICADAS; 22 USURPER; 23 ADHERE; 25 MADAM.

gressman, I was not reappointed, although I again entered the competition and was highest eligible on the list.

It is a well-known fact throughout our nation that there is no civil-service standard used in these appointments. Anyone politically sponsored, even though a "numskull," can through favoritism or fraud become an eligible and win a postmaster's appointment over highly competent contenders.

This is indeed a "spoils system," putting to shame the "spoils system" of the Jacksonian era.

MAUDE O'NEAL,
Ex-Postmistress

Hatteras, N. C., December 20

Alive and Kicking

Dear Sirs: A copy of *The Nation* (September 28) carrying Alden Stevens's report on Dinuba, California, has belatedly come into my hands. This report was in large measure based upon a study I made in 1944, and I am anxious to correct certain misrepresentations.

Many of my former colleagues in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics would be dismayed to learn that their agency was destroyed. It was, to be sure, heavily curtailed in its activities by the Seventy-ninth Congress, but it continues to function as an important research agency of the government. Mr. Stevens states that the fall from grace which the bureau suffered was the result of my investigations into the effect of large farms on community life. There is no evidence in the hearings on the Agricultural Department appropriation bill for 1947 that the study of Dinuba and Arvin had anything to do with the curtailed budget. Failure to mention this study cannot be attributed to Congressional reticence, since there was none evidenced when the study was being prosecuted in the field and attacked on the radio and in Congress.

Finally, I question Mr. Stevens's rather whimsical treatment of Congressional action and doubt that *Nation* readers will be convinced by the element of mystery he implied. Important social legislation in Congress is fought for or killed by persons who know quite clearly the implications of such legislation.

In raising these objections to Mr. Stevens's article I do not wish to imply any criticism of his analysis of the town itself. The social results of large-scale farming have proved quite apparent.

WALTER R. GOLDSCHMIDT

Los Angeles, December 16

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